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MANSE DWELLERS

REV. JAMES WEST, D.D.

"While leading people to Heaven, he was a genuine friend on the street, a real partner with mankind in business and social relations"

MANSE DWELLERS

By

LUTHER LITTLE

Illustrations by

K. WHITSETT

1927

PRESBYTERIAN STANDARD PUB. CO.

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DEDICATION

TO THE ONLY CHILD BORN IN MY MANSE

LUCILLE

AND HER MOTHER

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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A WORD TO YOU

This is not the stereotyped "Foreword"—it is a word to you. In fact, this book is a personal human message. What I am putting down in permanent type has long been needed. The book may have tales of laughter and pathos, but it is to be a true story.

The world knows much about the "Cliff Dwellers," or even the "Mansion Dwellers," but there is a woeful ignorance of "Manse Dwellers." It is not my purpose to invade the secret chambers, still, I am going to introduce to you the facts that you have a right to know; yea, the things you ought to know.

Whatever may be your belief about ministers and their families, you must admit their place and importance in our world. Much that you have heard about them may not be true, and much more that you have not known is still more nearly true.

They are people of like passions with all others. Their lives have gone along a varying path. Lights and shadows they know. But so far as this is concerned all people have the same experience. This is my task—to present to the world the minister as he has lived.

In our civilization there is not one place for the "Manse Dwellers" and another place for all others. We live together and the call of life is to those who live in pastoriums just as it is to those who live on the other avenue. But, during the generation in which I have lived, I boldly say that convention has decreed that there has been no place in human society for the minister and his family—they are humans apart.

My acquaintance with the "Manse Dwellers" is not limited. I have been in their homes from ocean to ocean. I have shared their hospitality from the blue tide of the sea to the tideless blue of the plains. I have counted thousands of my friends by the firesides of the parsonages where I have met the "Queen of the Manse" as well as the sons and daughters.

Though my tale is to be presented in the form of a story—a thrilling romance—its basic facts are none the less authetic.

For the verdict in the case herein presented, I await the discussion of my readers.

THE AUTHOR.

CHAPTER I

High Feast

HE phrase "Installing the new pastor" should be changed to "High Feast." On that day all the half-dead and dying church members come to life. Families whose pews have been vacant for months are back at church and the faithful burden-bearers believe the Kingdom is coming. The call of a new pastor and his installation is about all in which many church members are interested. This fact explains the throng and buzz at the First Church of Tarrytown the first Sunday in April.

"Good morning, Deacon Stone," said a rather gaudily dressed fat woman as she held out her hand to the Deacon. He returned her greeting with kindness and appreciation. However, it was evident that the Deacon did not recall her name, which did not interfere with his graciousness. "I am so glad to see you. Where do you live now?"—hoping the name of her street would identify her. "Oh, I live at the same place"—which statement left the Deacon in the same dilemma. She continued, "I

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wish you would present me to the new minister today." This request refreshed the memory of Deacon Stone and the story was now out. He remembered this expression which was made several years previous by this same smiling fat lady, when the former minister, the Rev. Henry Harvester, was inaugurated. "Yes, I will be glad to introduce you to our minister today, Mrs. Todd. We are anxious for all of our members and friends to meet him." Deacon Stone was not yet certain whether Mrs. Todd was a member or just a friend. All doubt was gone when the stout lady remarked, "We expect to be here regularly now as we have a new minister." Deacon Stone further remembered this last expression made some years ago. The Deacon began to wonder if this promise had any better prospect of being fulfilled than the other one—at least he hoped so. Not that he believed Mrs. Todd and her family to be bad people, or unworthy of cultivation, but the unwelcomed truth pressed upon him, that they, like some others, would not stay by the daily tasks of the church unless they could have the thrill of newness. This not only applied to the preacher, but to the music, the ushers, and all other phases of the church life.

So, as the hour drew near for the morning worship, the crowd grew larger and larger. All of the

officials of the church were glad, even those who earnestly desired the former pastor, Dr. Harvester, to remain with the Tarrytown Church, but had accepted it all as a good Providence, especially since Dr. Harvester had gone to a good church out West. Maybe the time had come when the church treasury would see better days and the whole church be uplifted.

The clock struck eleven and the organist played her best on the fine three-manual pipe organ. When the voluntary and the anthem were done, Rev. James West, D.D., arose and announced the first hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers." To some this hymn was an omen of good and to others a misgiving. In exactly one hour and ten minutes the service was over. The congregation came forward to meet the new pastor, his wife and their two fine children, Alex and Ruth, they being nine and seven years of age.

Dr. West married early in life, before he heeded the call to the ministry and just six months after graduation from the State University. His wife was Miss Hazel Small, of Landsdown Estate, Va. A year later he told his young wife of his call to the ministry. Up to this time he had occupied the Chair of History in one of the state schools. Hazel Small West was the woman of the hour. She dis-

cussed the matter seriously and reverently with her husband. After a month of prayer and meditation the young professor yielded to God's call and his church ordained him to the ministry. He resigned from his professorship, and in the autumn of the same year entered the Theological Seminary. His beautiful young wife accompanied him and they secured a small apartment in which they lived for the three years of their preparatory course. Before Christmas of that year Alex, their first baby, was born, and the little apartment in the big city became the first manse to the trio. Notwithstanding Mrs. West was an honor graduate of one of the best colleges in the state of Virginia, she was also domestic. She kept the apartment-manse and did all the work. In the new term after the holidays she began to study with her husband, though she did not attend the lectures. The happy months of preparation went by rapidly and they dreamed of the days to come in the pastorate and in the real manse.

Towards the close of the third year, in the "School of the Prophets," a girl baby came, and now their little manse was complete. This baby they named Ruth Small West. When commencement was over and Dr. West had received his diploma they left the little apartment and moved to Glendale. This was a delightful county-seat town with a cultivated and

pious citizenship. The young preacher had been called to this field three months before his graduation, hence, the church had time to place the bungalow-manse in fine order to receive the new pastor and his family. Once settled in Glendale, and so happily environed, they could and did look out upon life with its roseate lane leading into a wonderful world. It was in this place they spent their first pastorate of several years, before coming to the large church in the city of Tarrytown, the introduction to which the reader has just followed in brief outline.

Go back to that scene of the installation for a moment and see those four fine young souls, Dr. and Mrs. West, Alex and Ruth, as they leave this first service and go to the larger manse for their first Sunday dinner in Tarrytown, with much history stretching out before them.

CHAPTER II

It Is Monday

HE Wests had not been in the new manse long enough before their first Sunday to get fully acquainted with it, therefore Monday morning found breakfast very much later than usual. They had brought their cook with them from Glendale. This seemed most fortunate since every other thing was new and strange, for this thoughtful maid could give at least a touch of the old life. She knew exactly what to prepare for breakfast, although she had difficulty in finding the china, and other needed equipment, in the new surroundings. At the morning meal they naturally discussed the new congregation, the big parsonage and the large city. It was evident that all of them were a bit homesick that Monday morning—a feeling that they did not experience on Sunday amid the excitement of the day. Ruth said she left her doll upstairs crying and Alex missed his favorite dog. About that time, Mrs. West excused herself and went into the kitchen to help Jardine, the cook, do

something, but nobody ever knew just what she really did, but the fact that she brought back to the table a fresh handkerchief told a mute story. The day wore away amid hanging of curtains and adjusting of books. As the weeks went on the little family found their places in work and in play.

Tarrytown had thousands of citizens but none with more culture of head and heart than the new dwellers in the manse. Dr. West may have been a true "sky-pilot," but he was that in addition to being a real human being, well adapted to leading people to heaven, but felt that he wanted to help them along the road while traveling there. Hence, he was a genuine friend on the street and a partner with men in their business and social relations. This fact gave him an ever-widening world and increased his calls to service. Mrs. West was a woman of letters and music which, when added to the graces of heart, gave her a commanding place in any circle. But what circle should she officially enter? Of course, she could not enter the social world, even if she wanted to do so. If she went into the woman's clubs she realized that even there she would be called upon to foster such social functions as are out of harmony with church life. In fact, Mrs. Perkins and Mrs. Houston in their first call at the manse had expressed the hope that the new minister's wife would not join

any of these clubs. Mr. and Mrs. West had sufficient judgment of their own to know that the pastor's wife should not be the president or leader of any of the church societies. How about the many civic, patriotic and musical clubs? The cost for this was prohibitive since a growing family and school debts were upon them. To be sure, the salary in Tarrytown was larger, but city life demanded more. So, in the early days of this new pastorate, it was dawning upon Dr. and Mrs. West that their places were more or less limited. Even Dr. West had received an anonymous letter advising him to give up golf. Mrs. West, so fine and philosophical, did not take these circumstances to heart. But a little foreboding came to her heart when she thought of her children and where they would stand in the days to come.

The congregations grew and the usefulness and prosperity of the church was evident. All were grateful for this, and the pastor was happier than all. Even Mrs. Todd, and some other renewed church attendants were coming to the services on Sunday mornings if the cook did not come too late to have breakfast on time.

Ruth and Alex were making new friends and proving themselves to be just children. They had been in Tarrytown a few months and Alex had only had one fight and Ruth had talked back in ugly

tones to only two neighbor girls. This seemed a fine record for children born of such blood as Ruth and Alex.

Finally October came and both children entered the public school. Dr. West was in full swing of his growing work and Mrs. West was happy in the manse.

CHAPTER III

"Blinker"

BOUT a week before the first Christmas, as the little group sat before an open fire one evening, the door bell rang and Dr. West walked to the door. There stood a man of kindly face, who in fine voice introduced himself to the pastor as Frederick Blinkerman. He was invited into the room to share the warmth of the fire. When the light was on the face of the stranger, Mrs. West recalled that she had seen him in the congregation at nearly every service since they had come to the big church in Tarrytown and immediately spoke of this. He admitted that what she said was true. She knew that she was correct in this because there was a scar on one side of his face which expressed itself in a nervous twitch of the left eye. The pastor then asked him if he was a member of the church and Blinkerman replied in the affirmative. The remarkable thing about this visit, and all that is connected with it, rests in the facts yet to unfold about this man.

He had called this evening to meet the pastor

and his family and to tell them he was at their service, either personally, or for the advancement of the church. He further stated that he had not pushed himself to their attention as he wanted the other members to have the first chance. He spoke in terms of affection of Rev. Henry Harvester, the former pastor, and incidentally mentioned some of the work which he had aided the former pastor to do. It further developed that he had kept up a regular correspondence with Rev. Henry Harvester since he had gone away. So fine, genuine, and composed was this visitor that he stood the strictest test of character. He won the confidence and respect of the two children, Ruth and Alex. After he had gone away they could repeat nearly all that he said during his brief but dignified visit.

Dr. West could not get this man out of his mind. Next morning, before he went to his study, he walked down to the office of one of his official members who happened also to be the treasurer of the church. After a few moments in the official's office, he said, "We had a visit last evening from a most interesting man. He seemed so sincere that he impressed all of us. He would not let us see into his affairs, either of family or business, though he said he was a member of our church. His name is Frederick Blinkerman." The official smiled, with

evident pleasant thoughts in his mind. Then he said, "Yes, pastor, he is a member of our church and though not of the limelight type, he is true and wonderful." Then turning to the vault where he kept the church books he drew out the great ledger. "See here", said the treasurer, "is the name of Frederick Blinkerman. He has missed giving his regular offering to the church only about eight Sundays in more than six years, and those Sundays he was away on as mysterious a trip as his own life has been hitherto. Note here that though he missed these Sundays he paid for them in advance." Dr. West had already learned that even though giving of one's money may not be the only test of one's Christianity it is the greatest test. The official then invited the pastor into a private room and told the following story: "This man came into our church for the first time about five years ago. The church was smaller then and I saw and welcomed him at the door. That scar on his face marked him to me. I asked him his name and he gave it as 'R. Frederick Blinkerman', but added, 'I go by the name of Blinker, so just call me that.' As the members came to know him they yielded to his request to call him 'Blinker'. I then asked him where he came from, and all he said was, 'I got off of the boat'. Had you asked him last night where he came from he would

have told you he 'got off of the boat.' The first morning I met him at the church he told me he was going to join our church when he could become connected in business. He further stated to me he had his church letter. I then knew that when the letter was presented we would know of his home and more about him. He soon secured a position with one of the large business firms of the city, which position he has held from that day to this with frequent promotions and increasing confidence of his employers. Finally the day came when he presented his church letter, but to our disappointment it was a letter from a chaplain in the American army, stating that he had baptized Blinkerman in Florida, and commended him to the church of our faith. We knew no more than we did before. He lives in the same boarding house he entered when he first came and is the favorite of the landlady and all the boarders. He joined the church a short time before the Rev. Mr. Harvester came to our church and no preacher has ever wanted for a friend when he is around. The wound on his face seems to make him sensitive and timid, so he will not take any public part in church life unless he is forced to do so. Once, when we wanted to ordain him a deacon, he declined to allow it, saying his reason for refusing was that he had noticed when most men were

made deacons they no longer attended prayer meeting or the Sunday evening service and he could afford to miss neither. He really thought to be a deacon, one had to absent himself from these services. So now pastor, you know all we know of 'Blinker', except that as you have dealings with him you will find him to be a man of noble ideals, fine education and a true soul."

Dr. West turned away from the office of his church official and walked to his study wondering just where "Blinker" came from, what was his history, and feeling that in him he would have a real supporter. But we will hear more of "Blinker".

CHAPTER IV

Three Months of Visiting With An Interruption

NOW that the general affairs of getting settled were over, Dr. West began a systematic visitation. He had gone over the church rolls with his secretary, Mrs. Anne Black, as accurately as he could and by the use of all directories had located the membership by streets. Of course, there was much moving on the part of the members and a list that is correct today would be more or less out of date tomorrow. The church was located down town in the very center of the city, hence, the members lived in all directions. With a good automobile he could do the work more rapidly, but he did not have that automobile. The first week of the visitation he would ride the street car to a given center, from that point would walk up and down the street, and thus get along fairly well. That spring was one of much rain and the exposure brought a serious attack of pneumonia. Hospitals were not so much used in those days so the pastor was kept in the manse with Mrs. West as the chief nurse. As he grew worse a professional nurse was

employed, but the battle against the disease was a hard one. For a few days the situation seemed hopeless. One Wednesday evening at the close of prayer meeting, Blinker arose and asked all who believed in prayer for the healing of the sick to meet him in the church parlor to pray for the recovery of the pastor. The prayer meeting adjourned in quietness and most of the people went their way home. Nine repaired to the parlor and joined Blinker, who made the tenth. They sat in silence several minutes when Blinker realized that as he had called the meeting, he must make a move. The scripture was in his heart but not in his memory. So he asked a good woman, Mrs. Bingham, teacher of the Woman's Bible Class, to give them some scriptures on which they could base their prayers for the sick. This, Mrs. Bingham did in a most assured tone. Then others supplemented the main scripture reading. Ten people fell on their knees and ten prayers, some of them much broken and some of them only a cry to God to be the Great Physician to the body of the good pastor, were uttered. The next day, Dr. West was surprisingly better and continued to improve rapidly. Within a week he was sitting up and within a month he was able to be about his duties. Much time was lost in his visitation program but a larger faith was gained

to the pastor and to many of his people. On the other hand, some of the members said he would have gotten well anyway. The story of his sickness and recovery is told, so you can reach your own conclusion.

The first Sunday following his illness Dr. West faced a great and grateful audience. The windows of Heaven were open and new grace came down from the glory. On Monday evening, just before the gloaming, a noise was heard at the front gate. Fully three dozen men and women were laughing and talking. Several automobiles were out there and all horns were blowing. Dr. and Mrs. West walked out near the group. Two men and two women who had been appointed to the task met the manse dwellers and escorted them to a shining new automobile while one of the church trustees, Brother Albert Love, made the presentation speech, asking the pastor and his wife to accept this car as the gift from the church. After a few minutes pause, Dr. West responded in measured words of appreciation. Once or twice his voice broke and all the time Mrs. West was crying. But the strain was relieved when Alex shouted in a shrill voice "Dad, let's go to ride." When greetings and good wishes were spoken the company went away and left the beautiful new car, only the demonstrator remaining. So hats and coats

were hurriedly put on and they did "go to ride", and when they came back supper was cold and Jardine was angry, for it was her lodge night.

In a few days the pastor had learned to drive, the visitation was resumed, and the three month's program was accomplished in one. What the pastor learned on these visits was both encouraging and depressing. Many of the people were loyal and ready for a forward movement. On the other hand there were complaints, sad stories, but worst of all, the excuses made were maddening. If, as many said, God came first, he could not understand why so many Christians put Him last. One fact which Dr. West discovered in this first visitation was to him very pleasing. He found that his church was made up of all classes. It was now evident to him that it was a cosmopolitan crowd. There were those who were day laborers, earning their bread in the sweat of the brow; then the employed people in the offices; the professions were liberally represented; and there were many people of ample means. This is the kind of a church that he wanted, so now he found he had it.

One evening he earnestly talked over the situation with his wife in whose confidence and advice he had always found help and comfort. Sitting on the porch of the manse, while the children played in the

yard, he said, "Hazel, this pastorate is just what I wanted, but now that I have it, I do not know what to do with it. It is a cosmopolitan group. I ought to be about four men to meet the requirements. The situation is such that I am both happy and blue. If I succeed, I am made, if I fail the future is dark." There was a pause but in no way awkward. It was Heaven's moment to two souls that had given themselves to the greatest work God ever entrusted to mortals. The silence was broken by Hazel West, who said, "But, James, I consider you equal to four men". She need not have said another word. Any man who has a wife who believes in him like that can be four men if he has the normal power of one. Yet Mrs. West added, "I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me." What he learned during this visitation period, followed by the brief conversation with Hazel, gave James West as much power for his work as did all three years of his seminary course and it was accomplished in thirty days and Hazel delivered the diploma.

CHAPTER V

Appraising the Official Board

NE day while Rev. James West was sitting in the office of the general secretary of the church he noticed some books on the desk of Mrs. Black, the secretary. He saw that they were the journals of the proceedings of the deacons and of the trustees covering a period of nearly ten years. He casually began to read over first one of the books and then the other. For more than an hour he was oblivious to the noise of Mrs. Black's typewriter. He saw that the records of both the deacons and trustees fairly bristled with the stories of splendid actions and good movements on the part of these two official boards. These minutes gave him an enlarged appreciation of these splendid men. Finally he came to the actions of these boards since he had been pastor. Like the records reading far back into the church's life, he saw what fine movements had been made on the part of these boards since he had been with them. As he had presided over the deacon's meeting for nearly a year, he knew that these were bonafide.

After reading both accounts he placed the books back into the custody of Mrs. Black and went leisurely into his private study. Earnestly as he tried to think, he could not recall when any of these noble resolutions of the past ten months had been executed. Living up to these official actions would have done wonders for the church. However well these boards had done their work in the long ago he had no definite knowledge, but he was haunted by the cruel fact that they were not fulfilled during his brief career. He was deeply conscious that the individuals of these boards were sincere and devoted men. Why were there so many good movements prepared, discussed, voted and placed on paper, and there ended? Certainly these splendid men were not simply playing a childish game. To be sure there were one or two reactionary members on these boards, who were afraid that the pastor would lead them too rapidly, but this could not explain the inaction of more than thirty other progressive men. It was unthinkable that this pitiful minority could control the life of two great boards. What was the matter? Dr. West had reason to believe that these official members of the church were his friends and loyal supporters. He had counciled with them and they had assured him that such was the case. He had played golf with many of them; he had been in their homes

and places of business, but he was sore distressed as to why the forward movements which had been promised to him and which had been made the order of the boards, died so suddenly.

In thinking over the work of the past ten months, he called to memory the fact that nearly all of the money for regular or special purposes had been raised through his pulpit work and by his public appeals. About all that had been done in gaining new members was a result of his own public and private efforts. Even whatever growth in the number and efficiency in the Bible School, was his responsibility. Of course, there were the good superintendent and sacrificing teachers, whose co-operation was beyond appraising, but he could not escape that greatest of all loneliness—working at a great task alone.

Not until the first of the following week did the pastor get even a partial explanation of the situation that pressed itself upon him by the reading of the journals of his two leading boards. A financial obligation had fallen due and on Sunday the announcement was made that the trustees were asking for the co-operation of the church in gathering the large sum needed to take care of this demand. The trustees were pleased with the manner in which Rev. James West had presented the matter and so expressed themselves at the close of the service. The plan

was to follow this announcement with a whirl-wind campaign. So on Monday the pastor called on the chairman of the board to see how well he had his committee organized for the work before them. The chairman of the board said to him, "Pastor, I know we need this money and I am in sympathy with the movement, but I am so burdened with my own business that I cannot touch it for ten days, even if I can then. This is the time when, if I neglect my own affairs, I will lose all I have done for months leading up to this time. You just cannot depend upon me." The pastor then went to all nine of the trustees and with one lone exception he heard the same story he had heard from the chairman. Did this prove to the pastor or to the world that these were bad men? Not by any means. All of this was bringing to the mind of the brilliant pastor just what had to come sooner or later. It unfolded the fact that new conditions in business, human society, and in the church, forces upon us a new method of work. These men were busy and all of them upon a worthy work and when that work was viewed in the light of Christian men, it was a Christian work, so that was their task. The fundamentals of the Christian religion and of the church were still the same and unchangeable, but the application of those fundamentals is different. Neither men nor women

live their lives in the same way as they once did. The way those lives are lived now is far better than the old way. If business is not done today on that high, energetic, and noble standard, such as a Christian society demands, then it need not be undertaken. Men owe to their tasks a full day's work. When you apply this law to the Christian employed young men and women, the same truth grips you. The skill, the loyalty, and true service belong to the employer and not to the church or any other outside interest. But let it be plainly understood that their money does not belong to their employers. So this is the one thing that they can use for the advancement of the church. All of these truths pressed themselves upon the pastor of the church at Tarrytown. He was now coming into the eternal realization that there was no such thing as "church work" as something different and apart from daily work. All service that Christians render in the world is sacred and should be consecrated to God.

The future course of pastor West was to create an employed staff of trained workers whose full time is to be given to the church. This, of course, would not prevent the general church membership from doing their part in the regular Sunday School, Young People's, or church departments. Neither would this plan excuse the men and women of the

church from being "flaming evangels" during their daily contact with their fellow-workers. He was not seeking an innovation but he was adapting the Lord's great work to that which modern circumstances demanded. On the following Monday evening, Dr. West called a joint meeting of the deacons and trustees and presented to them the findings of his heart as to this plan. For two hours serious and frank discussion prevailed. He made it clear to his boards that he did not discount them but that this movement, looking to an employed staff, was only an endeavor to have the modern church keep step and fall in line with the progress of the new world, and that without sacrificing any principle laid down in the New Testament.

He showed these boards that, with a church as large as theirs, by tithing their net incomes, they could finance this new program with more ease than they had been doing under the antiquated methods. When the discussion first opened it was evident that the majority was either against him or skeptical. As the conference proceeded the boards caught the vision and when the vote was taken all supported the motion except two deacons and one trustee. These three never ceased their opposition and criticism of the pastor and the movement but they never succeeded in destroying it. A committee was ap-

pointed to aid the pastor in selecting two new workers to be added to the church staff, one to be financial director and the other educational director. In due time these two experts in their respective fields took up their work and the church at Tarrytown entered upon a new and greater day. Let it be said, and with truth, that the church immediately entered the highway that leads to conquest, and the money was forthcoming. Unprejudiced business men promptly admitted that the church was taking its place along by the side of modern business, when it recognized and used specialists and experts in its work and heeded the Bible plan of systematic, co-operative, and proportionate giving, rather than by the cheap and indirect methods of "money-making" for the church.

CHAPTER VI

Dr. West Attends His First State Convention

THE new pastor came to Tarrytown just one week after the Denominational State Convention convened the previous year. He had twelve months of work with his church before meeting many of the pastors of the state, as his former church was in another state. He looked forward to the Convention with hope and fear, joy and forebodings. He wanted to know the other workers of his denomination but he was wondering just what they would think of his year's work and especially of the new movement which the public press had called a radical one. He half wished that he had waited until after the convention before installing the new church staff.

The Convention was held this year at Dale City, the next largest city of the state, Tarrytown being the largest. Several members of Pastor West's church were going with him. The distance was about one hundred miles from Tarrytown. The train left at four o'clock in the afternoon, which gave the pastor time to do some work in the fore-

noon. He spent most of the morning dictating letters and leaving instructions with Mrs. Black, his private secretary, as to what work she should do on the records, and then asked her to deliver some messages to the rest of the staff as to their duties during his absence. Mrs. Black had been in the church office ever since he came and Dr. West knew that he could trust her to carry out his plan for the week. When he was through with the instructions he walked out in the church yard where the old faithful janitor, Black Jerry, was pruning the hedge. Addressing the janitor he said, "Jerry, I am leaving this afternoon for the State Convention and I hope you will do everything just right in my absence." Jerry placed his clippers on top of the hedge and looked up at the tall, handsome pastor and said, "Yessa, boss, I'se gwine to do dat. I'se been drawn close to you dis year, for youse tooken holt with a master's hand. All our pastors is been good, but dare is some'ten strong about you,—depend on me, boss." James West turned away and walked over to the manse, ate his lunch and finished packing his suit case. At the scheduled hour, Mrs. West took her husband to the station and on arrival they found his church messengers ready to board the train. To his surprise, the pastor saw at the train a deacon who had not been appointed to attend the convention

and he was one of the men who had opposed the new movement in the two boards only a few evenings ago. This particular deacon was a man of unrelenting will and put his own wish and judgment above that of the pastor and the entire church. Just why he had suddenly decided to make the trip, and what he would say to the people of the State Convention, could not be fully conjectured but it was known that he was a critic. When Pastor West came up to the deacon, he extended his hand and said, "Brother Bush, I did not know you were going with us, but I am glad to see you and hope we will all gather an inspiration and help from the convention." Deacon Bush replied in a respectful but cool attitude, "I do not know whether I will get any help from the Convention or not, but certainly I expect to bring information and instruction to the Convention. I had not thought of going till the last few days, but I could not get away from what I considered the pull of my duty so I am on my way." About that time the whistle of the approaching train blew and all made ready to enter.

James West could not be exactly at ease as they traveled on their way to Dale City. The train arrived on time, at seven-thirty, and the Union Station was decorated in honor of the coming messengers from all over the state. The committee as-

signed all visitors to their homes and hotels with care and courtesy.

The convention met at ten o'clock next morning in the public auditorium of the city. It was freely said that this was the most largely attended Convention in its history, owing to the fact that Dale City was centrally located and to the further fact that important issues were to be discussed and settled at this Convention. Pastor West began to meet some of the preachers and laymen in the lobby of the auditorium before the Convention was called to order. That he was a man of unusual appearance and occupied a most important field drew much attention to him, but he was the last man in the Convention who desired such publicity. Once or twice he saw Deacon Bush in close conversation with some of the messengers and especially with the official secretaries of the State Convention. He had no way of knowing just what he was discussing with these men and, in fact, did not want to know; hence he tried to forget it all. Once Dr. West had a slight intimation from a friend that Deacon Bush was trying to make the impression that his pastor was not orthodox because he advocated hiring men to do the Lord's work, but this same sentiment had been growing so much in the minds of the general Convention and its other pastors that Bush did not

realize that each knock he tried to render against West was only proving an endorsement. West was delighted to receive the congratulations of so many pastors who had read of his moxement, in the Associated Press. This gave the new pastor wonderful encouragement and lifted a load of dread from his heart, so the Convention was proving a real joy to him. He received a very hearty welcome from most of the preachers, though a few of them could not keep from showing a little envious spirit. One preacher went so far as to intimate that there was very little encouragement for the state pastors since the leading churches felt it necessary to turn to the outside for new pastors. On good authority it was learned that the view of this complaining pastor was endorsed by one of the state secretaries who had mildly tried to forestall the calling of West on the ground of his being a little weak in his support of certain policies of the State Convention from which he came, but seeing he could not prevent the calling of West, the secretary then became very friendly to the new pastor.

The hour came in the convention when the new pastors were to be introduced and among them was Rev. James West, of Tarrytown. When the presiding officer of the convention introduced West, he said, "This is Rev. Dr. James West, of Tarrytown,

recently of Glendale. We welcome him and expect greater things from his great church than ever." Dr. West hardly knew what the secretary meant by "greater things" but he hid the saying in his heart and quietly attended the rest of the session of the Convention. The committee asked Dr. West to engage in the discussion of Christian education on the night it was to be presented and the new pastor consented. When the time came for his speech he spoke briefly and to the point, stressing the importance of education being Christian. He committed himself entirely to the orthodox standards of education, such as would conserve faith in the old Book. This speech pleased most of the convention and West could now go home feeling that he had made a large place for himself in the hearts of the messengers. The secretary of Education threw some light on the phrase "Greater Things", when he said on Education Night that he expected the Tarrytown church to double its gifts to the Educational Board, now that the pastor had taken such hold of the work.

Before the Convention adjourned an effort was made to get the messengers to pledge a given amount of money for their churches to give to the programs of the boards for the following year. Dr. West declined to commit his church, saying that the financ-

ing of the Lord's work should begin in the local church, and that he proposed to make the canvass in his church and on the results of that canvass he could give week by week what the members turned into the treasury for education and missions.

The Convention was over and all the messengers of the Tarrytown Church returned on the same train, except Deacon Bush, who had left the Convention and returned home two days before adjournment.

CHAPTER VII

A Small Black Hand With Three Fingers

IT was the last of the week before Pastor West had decided upon his themes for his Sunday sermons, caused by the fact that he had been attending the State Convention. Yes, he was happy over his experiences at Dale City, yet it was difficult for him to gain that poise and concentration which ordinarily characterized his life. After dinner, on Friday evening, the pastor excused himself and went into his library taking the books and notes which he had brought from his study at the church and began again to see if he could get his messages for the following Sunday. Search as he would, the subjects and the sermons seemed to evade him, until he was almost in despair. He knew that by nine o'clock next morning both themes must be ready for the press. As the clock struck twelve and all was still in the big manse, the family being asleep long ago, there seemed to appear to him an angel of light bearing two parchments, written on the one A. M. "Christian Co-operation", on the other P. M. "The Glory of the Cross". When the

clock had finished its long list of strokes, the vision vanished and the pastor had his themes, and as rapid as the appearance of this midnight visitor, Dr. West could see the outlines of his two sermons and he considered that God had sent them to him. He hurriedly wrote down the general outlines of the two sermons, assured in his own mind that the following day he could finish them and be ready for Sunday. After this preliminary work was done he went to his room and retired. During the night he dreamed of a small black hand with three fingers, after which he awoke and while the gruesome dream did not bother him at first, he again fell asleep and the second time dreamed exactly the same thing. This strange experience he could not put out of his mind. Each of the three fingers was an index finger and each pointed directly towards him. He determined to watch for the interpretation of these two dreams, though he never believed in the significance of such occurrences, and whatever might develop, he was going to consider it a coincidence rather than a revelation.

On Sunday morning, as James West sat in his study, the postman brought him a special delivery, unsigned letter, bearing three items. One was that Deacon Bush was speaking horrid words, mingled with poison, into the ears of some of the members;

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WALNUT RIDGE, ARK.

another was the church treasury was depleted and the staff workers would have to go; and the third, that the other pastors in the city were resenting his forward movements on the ground that their churches would suffer because of Dr. West's aggression. Of course, he knew that Bush did not write the letter, for he was named in it in a role in which he would not like to be known. In fact, he was forced to believe the letter was written by a friend, rather than an enemy. He gave but little attention to the letter, as it was anonymous, but he could not get away from the idea that these three things corresponded to the three index fingers of his dream. Beyond that he dismissed the matter and put his attention to the sermon which he was to deliver within an hour.

The service began with a winsome prelude and Dr. West entered his pulpit at the usual time, laden with a great message, which he confidently believed that God had sent him by the hand of a Heavenly Messenger. The first thing that greeted his eye after entering the pulpit was Deacon Bush, engaged in a whispered and confidential conversation, with such members of the church as would listen to him in the front vestibule of the church. What do men of Bush's type care whether God has sent His people a message or not, just so they can accomplish their

purpose? No more unfair advantage can be taken of any minister than to use part of the hour in which he is to bring a message of heaven to his people to distract their attention and poison their minds against the man who is trying to link the two worlds. So intent was Deacon Bush to spread his news, whatever it was, that his noise and agitation destroyed the effect of the music and worship during the first half of the service for those in the rear of the church and placed the pastor at a disadvantage in presenting his sermon, and destroyed the decorum of the occasion. Pastor West rose above the barriers as best he could and presented his subject in a helpful way. The evening service was not so interrupted, as Deacon Bush and his one or two sympathizers did not attend these services. The spirit of God came upon the pastor and the great audience so that a large number of people accepted a personal Savior and united with the church. Soon the lights were out in the big church and James West sat in his home, thinking back over the day which had presented so many lights and shadows. He was conscious that things were happening around his church, and for this he was thankful, for nothing would be more distasteful to him than to have a dead church. He dismissed the events of the day, read several interesting chapters in one of his favorite

books of romance, then retired and found most restful and delightful sleep.

Next morning he was in his study by nine o'clock, cheerful and bright, for he knew very little about blue-Monday. On his return from the Convention last week he had requested Mrs. Black to keep his mail and other items till after Sunday and bring them all to his attention on Monday morning. Mrs. Black was a most efficient secretary and was a help to the pastor in such a way that he had come to look upon her as God's servant, providentially placed. She was well educated, conscientious and loyal. She had learned to select the most important things and present these to the attention of the pastor. Many little and useless items she kept from him and managed to handle them herself. So this Monday morning she had a list of calls which he must make the first of the week. They were visits to the sick and needy which his assistant could not satisfy. She also brought his many letters, all of which she had opened, except the personal ones, and had answered them. Dr. West read his personal letters and immediately dictated a reply to all of them. He asked Mrs. Black to 'phone a request to all the members of the two boards, deacons and trustees, for a called meeting at eight o'clock that night and to urge them to come, and to do this before

writing his letters. While she did the telephoning and writing he was busy on the outside making the sick calls and visiting the new souls that had come into the world in recent weeks. The day was soon at an end and the boards assembled in the large parlor. Nearly all of the members were present, including Deacon Bush. Soon the meeting was called to order and after some preliminaries, Dr. West stated the object of the meeting, using the most kindly and dignified language. He spoke of how wonderful it is to have two great boards like these who loved the Lord and His church. With the most evident sincerity he spoke of what a blessing and comfort it was to know that practically all of them were worthy of confidence and trust. He recited how, when the new program of the church was voted a few weeks ago, all of them except three had supported the forward movement. To all of them he extended a pastor's appreciation, leading all the members of the two boards really to see that his motive and wish was to do the Father's work in the most acceptable way. These men were too sensible and too good to believe that Pastor West had any personal ambition or wished his own will done, except as that course was God's will. Then the pastor called attention to the disturbances made in the vestibule of the church the previous Sunday and

showed how it should be the pleasure of all officials to concentrate on the divine worship, helping others to the same concentration and how this inexcusable conduct was led by one or more who held membership in these boards. Following this statement there was a silence like the silence of the city of the dead. Finally one of the members arose and addressed the pastor, making a few remarks supporting what he had just uttered. Then before sitting down he said, "I move that Brother Bush be requested to desist from his caucuses and disturbances in the front of the church on Sunday mornings or withdraw his membership from this board, and that this motion be voted on without discussion." Quietly but firmly the motion was put and unanimously carried, Deacon Bush not voting. A motion was then made that the joint meeting adjourn, and it was so ordered.

Dr. West asked that the trustees remain for a brief meeting of their own. When they were in session, the pastor then frankly and fraternally discussed with them the financing of the church's new program which required much more money than formerly. He related to them some of the criticisms which had been made to the effect that the whole plan would soon collapse. He reminded the trustees that they had not hoped to carry those new financial obligations by the old methods hitherto used in the

church. He told them that he looked forward to the new canvass of all the church members to secure their promise to tithe their incomes as the plan by which he hoped to carry on the greater work. He asked them to stand by him until that canvass was made and urged them to help carry that movement through, which was to be inaugurated two weeks hence, according to the original plan. To all these pleadings the trustees gladly yielded and assured the pastor of their full support in the present hour and in executing the program. As the pastor went home that night he realized that two fingers of the little black hand had been broken. What about the third? The criticism and fear of some other pastors. This he planned to take up the next morning.

On Tuesday morning as he came to his study Mrs. Black informed him that he was requested to attend a meeting of the ministers in the parlors of his own church at eleven o'clock. For this he was glad, as he had meant to ask for the moderator to call such a meeting that very day. So at eleven o'clock the ministers assembled. When the regular business of the meeting was over, James West asked the privilege of making a statement. He first read the paragraph from the anonymous letter in which it was stated that the other preachers had feared that his new movement would lead to drawing away some

of their members. Then Dr. West said, "My bretheren, be forever assured that this will never be the case. My platform is and has been ever fixed on this question. You will never find me visiting your people. I will never discuss with them the propriety of their joining my church unless they take the initiative and seek my counsel. I have instructed my entire staff to follow this course and to live on this platform. I have requested my membership not to seek nor proselyte your members. In this matter I take high ground and challenge every preacher of this city to show wherein I have been, or am, unethical. Your members and your homes are safe from me and I only ask the same consideration at your hands."

Only two days of the week are gone and every index finger is broken.

God's skies are now blue. Next Sunday is the anniversary.

CHAPTER VIII

The Anniversary

HE week leading up to the Anniversary Sunday was one of deep meditation and soul searching for Dr. West. He felt that the year had not brought to the work all that he had hoped. The many changes in the policy of the church had come by force of circumstances. He took to himself none of the credit for whatever of good had been done, nor did he welcome to himself whatever of blame that might be attached to any mistakes. The rising tide of changes and adaptation to the new day in which he found himself was more responsible for all the new movements in the Tarrytown Church than anything he had done. Yet, Dr. West was by nature and training in full sympathy with this rising tide. He felt that any and all of the opposition to the growing program of his church, whether in the hearts of some of his own members or in the thinking of some of the leaders of the State Convention, would be of little consequence, as all the new movements were outgrowths of the church's heart.

Dr. West sat in his study on Tuesday morning in deep reflection. At length, there came an impression, almost a voice, urging him to review his diary. He immediately recalled that he had kept a personal history of the year. Going to the private book case he drew out the big book which contained the record of each day. Naturally enough he was thinking that from this record he could gather some things that would bring all the year back to him and aid him in what he should say the following Sunday. He well knew that one year only was not enough to give him a large place in the Church and community. In fact, he realized that he had scarcely started his work, and to make much of this anniversary would almost be a presumption. On the other hand he knew that, based on that year's plans, there were sufficient beginnings to make or destroy his future, hence, he determined to go forward with his preparation for a real anniversary.

Going on through this diary his eyes rested upon this entry—"Dr. Harvester, my predecessor, has just paid me a visit. He has been gone from Tarrytown six months. I have been here one month. Dr. Harvester has just spoken to me of his granddaughter, Miriam Hope. She is teaching in the public schools of Tarrytown and did not move to the new field of the Harvesters." Just as Dr. West read

the above lines from his diary there was a rap on his door. Mrs. Black announced that Miss Miriam Hope wished to see the pastor. She was directed to the study and stated that she had been excused for the morning from her school duties and had come to speak to Dr. West on some personal matters in which she needed the advice of a good pastor and the one who was a close friend to her grandfather, really her foster father. She related how in her early childhood, her mother, the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harvester, died, and that within two years her father died. She then went to live with her grand parents. Consequently she was in a real sense the child of the manse. Her grand parents sacrificed for her public schooling and then they all moved to Tarrytown about the time she was ready for college, and through strict economy and heroic efforts she was kept in the university through the four years of Dr. Harvester's pastorate in Tarrytown. She had just been elected to teach in the local schools when her grandfather left for his new field of labor. A letter from her grandfather brought the news that his health was failing and that within another year or so he planned to retire and move back to Tarrytown, and Miriam was to be the only one who would support them. Instead of being cast down on account of the new responsibility, aside from the grief at her

grandfather's broken health, she seemed to rejoice that her hour of service and helpfulness had come. Fresh in her mind were the burdens of the manse dwellers, and as she belonged to that group, she faced her part with the same heroism that characterizes the soldier in the face of the foe.

As Dr. West listened to this story he was moved with sympathy and admiration toward young Miriam Hope. Looking at her flushed cheeks and open brown eyes, he thought how young and how brave this young woman was. She could not be over twenty-two. So much had nature and training done for her that he considered her as beautiful and charming as any personality he had ever looked upon. He had heard of her fine record as a teacher. She had had but little of that young girlhood and social contact that comes to the school boys and girls of our modern day. Limited means and high standards of the manse had kept her from the school dances and parties in which other youths had engaged, notwithstanding the fact that she possessed the grace and culture which would have made her a shining light in any circle. She was about to leave the study when she timidly asked the pastor a great question. "Dr. West, would it be embarrassing or in any way displeasing to you if my grandfather and your predecessor should move back to this city

and live as a retired minister in your parish? We would want to remain members of your church and wait for the sunset of my grandparents." Of course, Dr. West assured her that he would welcome their coming at the appointed time and would be to them all that was in his power to be. As Miriam turned to go away her childish eyes met those of the pastor and said, "Dr. West, some other day I want to tell you of another and more personal story. You are thinking of the sacrifices I must make in serving and maintaining an humble rented manse, but that does not touch the deeper surrender I am making in order to care for my foster father and mother in the closing days of their lives. This deeper sacrifice is shared by another and I do not yet know how he will take it when I tell him. But my mind is made up. I am clear as to my duty and I cannot refuse them in their days of dependence. True cupid can await the will of the death angel. Good-bye, Doctor, I will see you again."

A story like that moved the pastor beyond anything that had come to him during this year of beginnings. It was hard for him to come back to the contemplation of the approaching anniversary. He meditated on the breakdown of Henry Harvester and there ran through his mind the everlasting truth that a little later in his life he was to

give his strength and talents to some plan which would adequately care for God's old soldiers. Then the pastor spoke audibly: "More of this later."

But to prepare for and come to next Sunday was the engaging thought of the hour after this unusual and interesting interruption. That afternoon, Dr. West called his choir leader and arranged some appropriate music for the next Sunday. Wednesday morning found the pastor in his study preparing his sermon, "The Open Door". Some of the ladies decorated the church and God did His part in lifting the golden sun from the east without a cloud in the way. A wonderful congregation gathered. Those who expected the pastor to dwell on a year's accomplishment were disappointed, for his sermon led towards the future work of the church. His vision was so inspiring and sane that not even Deacon Bush could or would dare to find fault. Twenty-five people joined the church that morning and most of these told the pastor that they had not come to church that day with the intention of joining, but the call of so marvelous a vision as he presented in his sermon lured them to duty.

Smiilng through her tears, Miriam Hope sat beside a handsome, well groomed young man that morning to whom she had not yet told of her approaching sacrifice.

CHAPTER IX

A Day That Cannot Be Postponed

THE Anniversary was over and on Monday morning Pastor West was dazed in the after glow. But a sterner hour must be met and could no longer wait. His new plans demanded money. He was business man enough to know that one of the big problems of the church was finances. He had led his boards into an enlargement of the work for which financial plans had not been made. His attitude at the State Convention was also on trial. Could his home church obligations be met and the mission work of the Convention be supported by his budget plan, or would the old method of pledging a given amount and raising that amount by the antiquated plan of occasional collections, outweigh his undertaking? Of course, he looked upon the duty before him with forebodings, almost of dread. He knew that the scattered opponents of his plan were biding their time, for this was the hour of supreme test. Dr. West had been pastor long enough to know that to hold an anniversary service or to preach on a savory and

popular theme was one thing and to bring a financial duty to the people was another. Deacon Bush knew that, too. This critical deacon and his few followers pretended that they were greatly interested in the financial success of the church, but the pastor knew that secretly they hoped for failure. Some of the officials of the church knew these inward facts also, but the body of the church did not know the secret wish of the opposition. Which way would the tide turn?

The greatest asset to a preacher in such a crisis as this is to know that his motives are right, his plan scriptural and that he and God understand each other. These conditions West tried to analyze. The week wore along and a few nervous, but good brethren, came into the study to ask questions and see if there were any signs of surrender on the part of the pastor. But as Saturday night approached the pastor's bearing seemed as a lone, unmovable and sentinel-like mountain, fixed and firm. Again he would seem like a seasoned skipper putting out on a new and uncharted sea. Sunday morning arrived; the music had been arranged. The pastor ignored the atmosphere of the strange hour and kept his faith fixed upon that God who never failed His prophet in the hour of right. The last word of the pre-sermon hymn died away and the pastor an-

nounced his text. "Ye have robbed me of tithes and offerings."

"My brethren, my tongue would cleave to the roof of my mouth if I should undertake to call you robbers. The dignified and sleepy bank has never had to yield its loot to your shining steel. The flying express train has never had anything to fear from you. As you have appeared before the world you have provided things honestly in the sight of all men. On the other hand most of you have unwittingly and unintentionally spent money upon yourselves that rightfully belonged to God. I would not say that you have, or would, defraud your landlord out of his rent, but you have occupied God's property, this beautiful world, and you have not given Him His rent, His tithe. It was God's purpose for the people of Israel that they should be His witnesses to the nations round about until those nations would turn to Him as the one true God. And that is exactly His will for the Church of today. Malachi teaches that Israel failed most conspicuously at the point of its obligation to God in tithes and offerings. It is an old saying, and as true as old, that when we are converted clear through to our pocket books, the genuine character of our conversion is no longer to be questioned. Paul touched the heart of his appeal to the Corinthians who had

been slow in most features of Christian living, when he said that his main reason for urging them to learn to be generous in their giving was that they might prove the sincerity of their love. Pious professions are easy but nothing more surely proves the degree of our love for Christ and His cause than the manner in which we give of our substance for the advancement of that cause. To boast of being a tither is absurd. As absurd as it would be to boast of being honest or of paying our just debts, and the only reason normal people acknowledge it, is the hope that their action and example will influence others.

"There is no lack in the Bible of specific commands for tithe-paying, or of explicit commendation for the performance of this duty and denunciations of those who neglect it. We find this duty recognized in the first book of the Old Testament. Later we find specific and repeated commands for its continued exercise. In the last book of the Old Testament we find its neglect denounced of God as nothing short of robbery. 'Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings!' In using the one-tenth of your income which is the Lord's portion you have robbed God of His property. This is God's way of stating this case. One seventh of all our time and one-tenth of all our income belong to the Lord to

begin with. The common law of God settles this. This was true before the Mosaic dispensation, during it and since then. When tithing becomes universal, or even widely prevalent, there will be no lack of brainy, consecrated young men and women as candidates for the noblest calling on earth, the Christian ministry. Naturally the standard of admission will rise and only the best will be accepted and they will be paid adequate salaries. As to individual Christians, giving will become what is now to all tithers, a joy. He says, 'Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty'. One of the greatest joys of tithing is the satisfaction of having given God the right of way. Of having put Him first in our income by laying aside one-tenth for Him the very first thing.

"Some might say, 'We can't afford to give so much when it takes every cent now to live'. Then we place a wrong estimate upon God's requirements. He says 'Bring in the tithes and then He will open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings upon us until there will not be room enough to receive them'. God did not institute tithing for the benefit of the church but for the benefit of the tithers themselves. The law of the tithe was made for man just as certainly as the law of the Sabbath. The benefits to

others are incidental and subordinate to the benefit we ourselves receive. In fact all of God's laws were and are intended for the benefit of those who obey them. We give gifts, we pay tithes. If the tithe is not a debt it is not worth talking about. Payment of the tithe like payment of interest or rent implies ownership of the principal by another. Giving implies ownership by the giver. Tithing puts God first in your life. Giving puts self first.

"When you tithe you become a partner with God on His terms. When you give you make your own terms. Do you know that if every member of this church would tithe, all that would be necessary during our Every Member Canvass would be to give each member a subscription card and our budget would be more than raised without a pledge from anyone outside. But I am not insisting upon your tithing just for this reason, for to preach tithing for the sake of the budget is to cheapen a great message. Even truth when proclaimed for revenue awakens suspicion. For tithing is not God's financial plan for maintaining His Kingdom, but the separated portion, the portion named by God is the Father's memory token to safeguard His children. It is not the value given but the value withheld that challenges attention and proclaims ownership. It is the privilege of both rich and poor together to

acknowledge the sovereignty of their common Lord, lest we fall into the easy mistake of thinking that we 'own' what we are given only to 'possess', and sin lifts its head of pride in God's own presence.

"Is anyone considered too poor to pay the tithe? No. Not unless he is so poor that his community should support him. Because it is God's plan that each pay a part of what he has been given to possess, I say that it is not Biblical to have dues in any church organization. There is never any definite stated amount of dues that is either democratic or scriptural. I challenge you to name one who is less happy, less generous, or less financially prosperous from being a tither? Knowing that, can we let our best friend, our Savior, go before the world as an object of charity, when if each would pay the little part he owes He would be master. The tithe of one's income to the Lord is not a charity. It is one's first and most pressing debt. A debt of honor, a sacred and supreme obligation, an obligation resting on each and every Christian believer. The tithe is not the outermost limit of a believer's duty in religious giving, but it is the innermost limit. Many a Christian ought to give far more than this, but never to pay less than one-tenth of his actual income. The most cheerful of all givers is the tither. And when I say tither I mean one who keeps account of

his gifts and knows whether or not he really tithes, for I venture to say there has never been a person who gave a tenth without keeping a strict account. The tither likes to have liberty in going the second mile, making free will offerings. If tithing does not express a real and not merely an imaginary distinction between adequate and inadequate notions of stewardship, it is nothing.

"The great need of the church today is money. We know that by the long list of missionaries, some of whom we know personally, who are waiting for the people of our country to give sufficient money for them to go. Right here in this church we need three more paid workers in order to reach as many lives as it is the duty of this church to reach. This great need helps to make finances the most troublesome subject you have to deal with and the greatest present church discontent is due to the prevalent methods of raising money. Drives, special days, special machinery, special appeals grow more unpopular daily and less productive. Money raising is often the most unpleasant aspect of the church's affairs. Many people think of it as thinly disguised begging and harden themselves against it for that reason if for no other. Christian testimonies have established the fact that tithing as a financial plan brings personal prosperity and church efficiency. Habits of

thrift, care, and accuracy encouraged by tithing would tend to produce these results without claiming for the tithe a special or divine sanction. At bottom the difficulty is this: Most of us, though we talk largely of democracy, have not yet learned the democratic principle of team work under the majority rule. We carry our protestant insistence of private judgment to an autocratic and destructive conclusion. Each individual and organization wants to further its particular scheme regardless of result or effect upon the church's life as a whole. It is nice, of course, to be thought generous by all, but God's plan and command is that all tithes be paid through the church treasury and not divided among anything in the city that might seem good or meet with His approval. The church that does not tithe and does not pay that tithe through the church treasury is apt to be a nerveless church. It dare not move unless the Aid Society chart the whole way or some rich member pave it for them. Finance is a ball and chain in many a church. Tithing would give it wings instead of leaden weights. So much energy is spent on money raising projects and meetings necessary to carry on such, that if the same effort were spent teaching tithing and making this a tithing church, then we wouldn't be so busy

raising finances that we can only dream of getting out and reaching people.

"There is a great swing toward teaching the people to pay their own church debts first. Of course it is our privilege and duty to make larger contributions to missions, but unless we do something and do it quickly to strengthen our home base, China will soon be sending missionaries over to convert the people living next door to us. It takes a large amount of money to keep up a great church like this, but even then it takes less than any other institution that serves as many people. Some people have the strange idea that supporting a church is an act of charity. There could be no greater mistake. We must support the Christian church in the community in sheer self-defense. It is beyond question as vital a necessity to the life of the people as the public school, or any other institution that we count essential to the best life of the community, and to sustain them we pay taxes gladly. What self respecting man would go to a city having no churches with the expectation of bringing up children there? Burn down all the churches in Tarrytown today and announce that none shall be rebuilt and note how the values of property will deteriorate within three months. Our deepest needs are met by maintaining the institution of the church and all its ministries,

and the deliberate abolition of churches would be moral and spiritual suicide.

"Your tithe, if paid through the church, would equip and support not only every enterprise we now have but every enterprise we could properly undertake, and that no matter how we grew. If every member of every church in this land would tithe, and by tithing I mean pay one-tenth of all their income through the church treasury, missionary treasuries would be full to overflowing, missionaries by the ten thousands could and would be sent all over the world. This generation would not pass away until every man, woman, and child on the habitable earth would have an opportunity to learn of Jesus Christ. All the Churches, Schools, Hospitals, Young Woman's Christian Associations, Young Men's Christian Associations, Associated Charities, Red Cross, with sufficient funds for stricken countries and everything else that does what we know is good in the city and other lands, could be built and properly equipped. All of this has to be done now by professing Christians by special campaigns and drives, which are not Biblical; and never will these causes get what they really need by any mere system. Never by any haphazard method allowing every man to whittle out his own principle. It will only be when the whole church generously yields herself to the

adoption of the principle of the tithe. This would pour all that is needed into all the treasuries of the agencies of the church and the great philanthropies and movements of charity. Other than this we shall never have all that is needed in any simple, fundamental, ethical way.

"I think every member will find that the acceptance of a principle like this marks a distinct era of spiritual enlargement in his life. It carries him forward and leads him out into a wider expanse. The whole thought of God's love, and presence, and human duty becomes more vivid. I am not speaking out of the air, pardon me for saying it, but in the past seven years of my life, I have tithed every cent of my income and not one penny of it has gone anywhere except through the channels of the church to which I belonged. My gifts to outside objects have to come over and above the one-tenth, and I am sure there are other tithers here who could also testify.

"I suppose we have many times stumbled at Horace Bushnell's word on this subject and wondered if, for once, one of the greatest spiritual voices of his time had not missed the true note when he said, 'One more revival, only one more is needed, the revival of Christian Stewardship, the consecration

of the money power to God. When that revival comes, the kingdom of God will come in a day.'

"Again, faithful stewardship means thankful love to God for all His blessings. His mercies are new every morning and fresh every evening. He sees to it that seed time and harvest never fail. We want Him not only to continue His blessings to us here, but to receive us into the joys of the redeemed hereafter. And reality must go with profession. There is one vitally important test of the quality of our love to Him. It is the degree of faithfulness with which we draw the line between our wants and our needs. Along that line we will solve our problems of stewardship. No one can do it for anyone else but each must do it for himself."

' "Go break to the needy sweet Charity's bread,
For giving is living," the angel said.
"And must I be giving, again and again,"
My peevish and pitiless answer ran.
"Oh, no," said the angel, piercing me through,
"Just give till the Master stops giving to you." '

When Dr. West closed his address there was silence in the great audience. Not a human stirred. No song was announced. The spell of God was upon them. When the stillness was broken it came from an unexpected source. Blinker, who never did anything inside of the church except breathe, arose and

asked to be heard. He walked down to the front, came upon the pulpit, while mute excitement reigned. Finally he said: "Christian friends, some of you have been kind enough to say I was a faithful and systematic giver. That may be true, but I have learned this morning that I am not a proportionate giver. As our pastor spoke this morning, I was counting my tithe. At present I give one hundred dollars per year to the support of this church and its work. My salary is five thousand. I owe God five hundred dollars per year and I begin today to set aside His part which is just five times what I have been giving. I hold in my hand a paper on which I placed some figures during the sermon. I know you, and the business of most of you. I declare by earth and heaven, if we pay the Lord His tithe we will put into His treasury one hundred thousand dollars rather than the little twenty-two thousand that we gave Him last year."

Blinker then shouted with shrieking, untrained voice, "All who will join me, stand". As by magic of a wand most of the audience arose. Cards were passed and tithers' signatures were taken. All that afternoon a committee counted the subscriptions based on the tithe. At the service that evening the announcement was made that the First Church of Tarrytown would put into the church treasury next

year, sixty-five thousand dollars as a minimum. Twenty-five thousand for outside objects and the rest for the church's great program. The local papers and the Associated Press announced to the world the Church's New Day.

CHAPTER X

Sunset and Sunrise Over the Same Love Nest

UST eighteen months from the time that Miriam Hope had made her first call on Pastor West, two wagons drove up to a little house nestled in the grove in the suburbs of Tarrytown. While the household goods were being unloaded from the wagons and placed in the cottage, one of the neighbors who had been a member of the First Church for many years recognized Dr. and Mrs. Harvester. She could not wait till the house was placed in order, but came at once to bid them welcome and aid them in arranging the furniture. The retirement of the ex-pastor and his choosing Tarrytown as his place of residence soon became known and met the approval of the church. All knew that two souls as noble as those of Harvester and West could find comradeship and congeniality even though one was the former pastor. When Miriam Hope moved into the cottage with her grand parents the public at once accepted the fact that she was to be the breadwinner, and the one to whom the landlord would look for his rent.

Miriam was one of the best loved teachers in the public schools and the very month that brought Dr. and Mrs. Harvester back to Tarrytown had seen her promoted with an increase in salary equal to the rent of the "Love Nest". An ordinary scene at this rented manse was when Miriam was leaving in the early morning for her school, while the retired and feeble minister and his wife stood among the flowers in the front yard of the little home. She would kiss them both goodbye while the parents would be handing her roses for her room. No home in the big city had more of love and heaven in it than this one.

Weeks and months went by with a rising tide of joy and contentment. Often would Dr. Harvester say, "This is just the place for my sunset while my wife and I go down the hill hand in hand." Then he would add, "But the only cloud is that our dear Miriam must carry the load," to which Miriam would reply, "Dad, that is my cloudless sunrise." But mother Harvester, because she was a woman, knew a deeper heartache for Miriam than her honored husband could know. Miriam had explained to her foster mother and confided to her a girl's secret. She was so glad to have a mother to whom she could tell of the battle that raged between love and duty. "That deeper sacrifice shared by another", which

Miriam, intimated to Pastor West on a former occasion, was ever to the fore in her heart. Whether Miriam could have forgotten that "deeper sacrifice" if left alone or not we will never be able to know because she was never left alone with her thoughts about it. When Sundays came there were four people in the Harvester pew at Dr. West's Church and there were four people at the Harvester dinner table, which meal had largely been prepared by Miriam before eleven o'clock on Sunday morning.

Among the hundreds of young men who had settled in Tarrytown was a young Yale graduate named Arch Cooper. He had taken high honors in the school of engineering at Yale. With but little experience, and less capital, he opened an office in engineering just about the time Miriam entered upon her career as teacher in the public schools of the city. On Thanksgiving Day of Miriam's first year at teaching, a football game was played in Tarrytown between two of the colleges of the state. Arch being lonesome and with the college spirit still fresh in his mind, decided he would go to the game. He called a college friend of his who was principal of one of the public schools and asked him to go with him. The principal cordially urged Cooper to come and join the teachers in their reserved section in the grand stand. This invitation Cooper gladly accept-

ed. The day was restful and beautiful with the yellowing vegetation of the season. There came back to the hearts of this group all the romance of college days. When all were assembled in the grandstand young Cooper was presented to the company. When they were all finally seated it so happened that Cooper and Miriam were seated together. Cooper had no special interest in either one of the teams, as his Alma Mater was far away. He enjoyed one touchdown as much as another. As the game wore away, he began to feel that this whole occasion gave him a new desire to succeed in his profession. Here were new acquaintances and no longer could he fail or succeed alone. He was fast being brought before the public and he could not slip in and out of the city unnoticed. He realized that he was becoming a part of the community. So full was his mind of these facts that he ventured to say some things to Miriam as to how much he desired to succeed so that he might be counted worthy of a place in the city which he was learning to love, and the more people he met the keener was his desire to be able to take his place. Once he intimated to Miriam that this was the happiest occasion he had experienced since he had opened his office in Tarrytown. Then the thought that he had failed so far to make any progress in his business haunted him. For-

tunately an exciting play was made and the attention of all was turned to the field as cheers arose from the side of the winners.

When the game was once more in progress with no exciting "forward passes", Miriam picked up the conversation and sensing the discouraged note in the voice and statements of her new acquaintance said, "Mr. Cooper, I can enter into your mood more than you know for I have just entered my career as teacher. This is my first year and I want to succeed so much it makes me tremble to think of a possible failure." The rest of the time they discussed their respective colleges and certain facts about the game which they were witnessing. When the game was over and the great crowd was breaking up and all were leaving, Miriam took advantage of the noise to say to Cooper, "To me this has been a wonderful occasion in many ways. We have started our careers about the same time, let us make our touch downs at any cost." He added, "And together."

This same young Cooper is the fine, handsome, and well groomed young man who found his way to Miriam's pew in the church, to the Harvester's Sunday Board and whom Miriam had in mind when she told her pastor that her sacrifice was "shared by another."

From the side lines of the gridiron Cooper went

back to his office wondering what Miriam meant by "at any cost" and she was wondering what he meant by "and together". One thing was sure in the mind of the young engineer; he knew that he had received the first inspiration given to him by a woman's heart and nature since the death of his mother, the year before he entered college. Miriam was likewise clear in her mind that another was added to her cloud of witnesses watching her struggle with life, and cared.

Arch Cooper was not a member of the church; he did not even claim to be a Christian. He had full respect for it and found much joy in attending the church of Dr. West. He had nothing but joy in the fellowship of Christian people and entered fully into all the social and religious features. It was left to Dr. Harvester to bring Cooper into full understanding and to the final decision. When he was in the little cottage, he would spend much time in Dr. Harvester's study and they would talk while Miriam and her mother were about the duties of home. In fact, these four were so in each other's lives they seemed to have been destined to be together. One day the ex-pastor brought the question to an issue with young Cooper and there in that study he found a Savior's pardoning love. The next week Arch Cooper sought out Dr. West and told

him how Dr. Harvester had led him to the light and that the following Sunday he wanted to unite with the church. It was a happy day for Dr. West and the following Sunday the entire church was made to rejoice.

Young Cooper was succeeding in business. He had just checked the records of the previous year and found that he had cleared six thousand dollars. One evening he and Miriam were sitting on the little porch of the rented manse when Cooper told Miriam he had a little matter of business about which he wanted to speak. He reminded her that she had been his inspiration; her friendship had been a real asset; her foster father had led him to be a Christian, and now, he felt that he wanted to use the tithe of his income to help her in renting and maintaining the little love-nest in the woods. All this was spoken with so much sincerity and honesty, Miriam could not help showing her deep feeling of appreciation, and amid sobs of thanks and kind words she managed to say, "No, no, Arch, I cannot take it. This is my task and my joy; I could not be happy in taking one favor from you or anyone, since God has enabled me to do this task I must and will do it. Besides your tithe belongs to the treasury of your church, which is the treasury of the Lord, to you. I appreciate your motive and your big heart, but I cannot

accept from even so good a friend as you one single thing."

This was the evening that Cooper felt as never before, was the time for him to plead with renewed zest that Miriam would consent to an early marriage. He reminded her that now he would be able to take care of her and help to provide for the dear old couple in their evening of life. "Arch", cried Miriam, "I know it may seem foolish to you, especially so now since you are a Christian and a member of our church for me to still defer our wedding, but so long as these dear grandparents of mine are alive I cannot leave them. I do love you, I promise to still love you, as we have pledged our love so often, but my duty is clear. They have not one soul in this world but me, and God would not bless us if I were to desert them now."

Never did Miriam seem so noble and true as she did in making that statement, and he freely told her so. On the other hand never was he so disappointed and so hopeless. He had so often poured out his love to her and now that he thought he was in position to help, maybe she could see differently. It was later than usual when Cooper left Miriam's porch for his apartment. He walked most of the way. Could she love him as he loved her?

Often Miriam told Arch that she could not marry

him while these dear ones were depending upon her for undivided interests and love. They might get along some way without her; in fact, Cooper had agreed to support them, but Miriam was thinking of that reward of love which she owed to them for their sacrifice for her, and now she must reckon with her own soul in paying it back and she was determined. If innocent, pure love ever was known; if devotion to duty ever outshone the stars; if young manhood ever stood the test, and if ever sunrise and sunset met and embraced, it was yonder in the little rented manse in the woods.

HOME OF TWO LOVE-NESTS

"If ever sunrise and sunset met and embraced, it was yonder in the little rented manse in the woods"

CHAPTER XI

Two Angels But One Was Belated

URING the next year, two angels visited the home in the little grove; one was the death angel, who arrived on time, the other the angel of relief which, however, came too late.

In the opening month of this year, Dr. Harvester completed the manuscript of his book. He had begun this work while he was an active pastor but he had never found time to finish it until he retired to the little home in Tarrytown. Early one morning in January as Miriam started to her school she passed through the small room which her grandfather used as his study and she saw the large package of written pages so orderly arranged, lying on the desk just where the author had left them the night before, and written on the last page was the word "Finis". Miriam knew that this word had direct reference to the finishing of the book but she could not get away from the thought that this "Finis" might have another and sadder application. She had noticed that the dear old man had grown so feeble in the last few months, in fact, he was not able to be up

for breakfast on that particular morning and she had taken his coffee to his bed before hurrying away to her day's work. All through the day the scene in the little study and the closing word to the manuscript came unbidden to her vision. When school closed she hastened home and found her foster father still in bed. Sitting down near him she began to talk of his book. He then told Miriam of his hope of getting the manuscript accepted by a reliable publishing company and in that way having a larger ministry than even in his days of activity. He also expressed the hope that the royalty on the book would enable him to relieve her of that crushing financial burden which she had been carrying, but about which she had never murmured. The grandmother told Miriam that if she would stay in the room with grandfather and entertain him, she would arrange the evening meal. When that plan was agreed to, Mrs. Harvester went to the kitchen with the determination to prepare for her husband his favorite dishes, but it was difficult for her to see since the day had brought to her the realization of what might happen so soon to Dr. Harvester, and this was the first time she had had a chance to cry. So many years they had traveled together, but now the road seemed about to end. She finally wiped away her tears and set about the evening meal.

Yonder in the bedroom, where Miriam sat talking about the manuscript and its possible publication, was being enacted a scene which played upon the heart strings of youth and age. Dr. Harvester dictated a letter to Miriam which she was to send next day to the publishers along with the manuscript. The title of this proposed book was "The Mission of the New Continent". In the writing of this manuscript Dr. Harvester had covered a new field in the literary world and he had done so with a master's hand and a scholar's touch. After the letter had been dictated and all plans made for the posting of the papers, Dr. Harvester asked Miriam to come close to his bed where he could place his hands upon her. With trembling strokes he smoothed her hair and caressed her cheeks. Then he spoke in fatherly words and tones.

"Miriam, you are so much like your dear mother, who, when she had to go home, left you to us. I have seen you grow in body and mind. God sent the ravens to feed Elijah but he has sent an angel to feed me. There are three darlings of my heart, your grandmother comes first, then you and your mother come side by side. If it had pleased God to give you three to me here in this little grove I would gladly yield my place in Heaven to others, but as this cannot be I am willing to go on over and

your mother and I will begin the rebuilding of the circle over there. Now, Miriam, what I really want to say is that I know Arch Cooper wants you to marry him and that for our sakes you have delayed. On the book of my life someone will soon write 'Finis' and I cannot agree to interfere with your happiness and especially the happiness of Arch any longer. He is a noble young man, so successful in business and more successful in heart. My child, this is my wish, and besides I believe my book will be accepted and my last days will be brighter. I know the little corner grocery store which I have tried to run since I have retired has been a failure, but you and all the world must know that this venture has been so out of harmony with all the endeavors of my life that I could not enter into it. The people would not come to trade with me because they hated to see me there. I am sure my book will meet with better success." Why wonder at the long silence which followed? What language could be employed other than a sob? "Grandfather" said Miriam, "the only thing that could induce me to marry before you go is that I might have you present to give me your blessing on my wedding day. If God gives me to know your last week on earth then that week I marry". Just then Mrs. Harvester came

in with a good supper for two. Dr. Harvester and Miriam ate together amid good cheer.

The next morning Dr. Harvester was better and came to his breakfast, making an effort to be as usual. Miriam took with her the manuscript which at the noon hour she was to register and send away. When the days began to lengthen into weeks Dr. Harvester would watch for the postman, hoping to hear from the publishers. It was a tedious wait, and one might say that the old prophet was a bit childish. In his almost impatience he grew more feeble and nervous as hope turned to despair.

The Ides of March had arrived and brought a short letter from the printing house saying that they could not accept his manuscript and that they were returning it to him. The letter admitted that the book contained many points of merit but the missionary and religious sentiments in it would make it too partisan for general sale. This news was almost too much for the venerable author and his spirit was evidently broken. Miriam and Mrs. Harvester tried to cheer him and in a measure succeeded.

The spring season had now come and the growing garden and blooming flowers brought charm and entertainment to Dr. Harvester. In these returning delights the old servant of God found diversion and forgetfulness. If he could have only known then

what was learned later, that the publishers had not really rejected his manuscript but were playing for a better contract, the garden and roses would have had a greater re-enforcement in their mission of good comfort.

Again the public schools closed after a fine session and Miriam welcomed her vacation, most of which she was going to spend with her grandparents in the hope that she might be to them a personal companion. Nearly every evening Arch would come out and the four of them would spend much time together, especially in the early hours of the evening. Once when Miriam and Arch were alone they discussed anew the publishing of the book. Arch told her of a good firm in Chicago, one member of which he knew, having met him in a business connection. He considered him a man of large vision and splendid business insight. Finally they decided to ask Dr. Harvester to try again. When the matter was presented next day to Dr. Harvester, he hesitated saying how his soul recoiled from being refused. The matter was dropped and nothing more was said about the book until near the approach of the autumn. One day he asked Miriam to send the manuscript to the Chicago publishers and immediately she posted it again. Soon he was looking for a reply with the same impatience.

It was not far this side of Thanksgiving when Dr. Harvester contracted pneumonia. The doctor was called and on his second visit to the aged patient, he told Miriam the worst, saying, "He will likely live several days but ultimate recovery is impossible." Early the next morning the grandfather asked Miriam if she wanted his blessing on her wedding day and she replied that she did. At noon that same day Arch came out to inquire for the sick man, and when they told him of what had passed between Dr. Harvester and Miriam as to a father's blessing, he could not conceal his delight at the thought that his day to perfect joy was so near at hand, even though he regretted the shadow to be inevitably cast over all of them by the going of one of the noblest souls he had ever known. Dr. and Mrs. Harvester and Miriam all knew the fine things of life and they were agreed that Dr. West, the pastor, was the one to perform the ceremony at the wedding, but added to this Miriam wanted and had a right to a father's blessing. The hour was set at eight o'clock that evening, provided Dr. West could come at that time. Cooper drove to the manse and found the pastor and explained to him the strange circumstances and the sudden decision. Dr. West was visably moved by every item of the sad, but romantic and beautiful occasion. At once he

cancelled another engagement and promised to be at the house in the little grove at eight o'clock. When the hour approached Mrs. Harvester brushed her husband's hair, fixed his pillows and arranged everything as attractively as possible and then dressed herself in her most beautiful gray dress, even placing the comb that Miriam liked so much just at the place in her hair where her granddaughter loved to see it. Two guests came in, a young woman who taught in the same building with Miriam and a young man who roomed with Arch in the apartment. When Dr. West arrived all was ready. In full view of Dr. Harvester and by the side of Mrs. Harvester the young people took their positions, and the pastor spoke words of truth and called on Dr. Harvester for his blessing. The old preacher held out his hands which seemed to be a veritable canopy and called down Heaven's blessings upon them in such a manner that it seemed as if divine romance were mingled with pure earthly love. His "Amen" sounded a guarantee that all he asked would be granted.

After the wedding everybody made an effort to have the affairs of the household move in their normal channels as Dr. Harvester was too ill for any confusion. They watched him through the night. The next morning he was weaker and observed less

and at five o'clock that afternoon he slipped away, being at peace with God and the world. Two days later the funeral was to be held at the church. So concerned had Mrs. Harvester been with the last hours of her husband that the pain in her heart had overshadowed the pain of her body. But by ten o'clock that night she was in the full grip of the same disease. The doctor was called and gave his best skill and did a fine physician's part. At eight o'clock the next morning he was called again and for hours he watched the rapid progress of the strange and cruel malady. Despite her brave endeavor Mrs. Harvester seemed hastening to overtake her husband, and just before sunset, while he waited in sheeted silence for her who had been his companion for a half a century, she joined him and together they went out. Yes, the death angel arrived on time.

The State Board furnished a small funeral benefit for the burial of superannuated preachers and their wives, hence, Dr. and Mrs. Harvester had a modest but nice burial. The funerals were held together at the church the following afternoon. Dr. West conducted them. One beautiful song was sung and the pastor used the text, "I have finished my course". What the pastor said was appropriate and gracious. The most important words he spoke to those who

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crowded into the great auditorium was when he said, "The great denomination which Dr. Harvester served and helped to make, furnishes him a shroud and a grave but they gave him no bread in his last days. The denomination clothes the worn out body of Mrs. Harvester in a robe of white but it did not quench the white fires of suffering through which her gentle and refined life has passed these last helpless years. As God gives me strength, my hand is set to the task of relieving other servants of His from this wrong."

It was a lonesome home-coming for Miriam when they returned to the cottage in the grove after the funeral but can the mind picture how much darker it would have been had Arch not been with her? We cannot but wonder if Dr. Harvester did not foresee this when he talked with her that evening weeks before.

While Cooper's business had grown to such full proportions that they could have moved into a larger and more pretentious home, he gladly yielded to Miriam's request that they stay, for awhile, at least, in the little love-nest, where the beauty of sunset and sunrise had mingled in such mellowing glow. The next morning Arch would not leave Miriam to go to his office. He knew that she needed him and he wanted to be near her. He told her that the day

she agreed to it he would take her on any honeymoon trip that she might select. All this they talked over while they were putting the house in order. That morning Miriam noticed in her grandfather's study, the mail which had been delivered the day before but which no one had had time or had cared to look at while the death angel was keeping watch in the little home. In the mail they found a letter from the Chicago publishing house offering one hundred thousand dollars for full rights to Dr. Harvester's manuscript. "Yes, the angel of relief has come, too, but he was delayed", Miriam told herself. The publishers were anxious for an early signing of the contract as they wanted to proceed with the publication. Dr. West was immediately called into conference and he advised the acceptance. As Miriam was the sole heir to all that her grandfather had left, the matter had to pass through the legal channels, and again she turned to Arch to direct it all for her. That evening as they sat in the little study Cooper revealed his great soul again by what he suggested. "Miriam", he said, "you know what a blessing this money would have been to your dear ones had it come earlier. It can be of no use to them now. We are young and my business is growing greater with each month and I will be able to earn all that we will need. I suggest that we turn over fifty thou-

sand dollars of this money to Dr. West and ask him to use it as the foundation of that great idea of his to care for the old and helpless preachers. Your grandfather would be pleased with this and I am sure Dr. West will welcome it as a gift from God. You can invest the other fifty thousand in your own name and all the money you will ever need I will gladly supply". Arch had been her ideal of all that was noble in previous years but now he seemed more than human. To make a foundation for the "Veteran's Reward" with money that her grandfather earned brought a thrill to Miriam that nothing could surpass, so she consented without a moment's hesitation. She asked Arch if he would take her right then to the manse, so that they could tell Dr. West their decision, and within twenty minutes they were driving to the home of Pastor West. It was ten o'clock when they reached the manse. The lights were still burning as it happened to be one of those rare evenings when the pastor was at home, and he and Mrs. West sat talking while Ruth and Alex were in another room preparing their lessons for the next day. Of course the Wests were surprised to see Arch and Miriam but the suspense did not last long for Miriam was so happy to bring the news. She told the pastor of their decision and at once asked Dr. West if he still planned to organize his move-

ment for the benefit of the old preachers. Slowly the pastor spoke and with firm expression, "If God ever answered prayer it is tonight. This movement has been my plan for years but not till now have I seen the way". Strong and self-controlled as Dr. West was he excused himself for fifteen minutes and when he returned his cheeks were stained and his eyes were red. They assured Dr. West that as soon as the details of the contract with the publishers were complete the fifty thousand dollars would be turned over to him and his board. The Coopers then went home to their cottage in the grove and the Wests retired. The pastor had experienced many wakeful nights over the ill treatment and underhanded work of Deacon Bush and some other members of his church, but this was the first night of his life that sleep had been driven from his eyes by the billows of joy.

CHAPTER XII

Smiling On and Through

EARS had been passing rapidly but not without their rewards. The growth of Dr. West's church had brought increased duties which his great physical and mental strength enabled him to meet. He had taken his theological course within three years and received his diploma as a reward for the lessons learned, but it had taken ten years of the active pastorate to teach him that the real problems of the pastor are not out yonder in the unchristian world but are within the church itself. The drunkard, the gambler, and even the polished sinner know their attitude is not within the teachings of the Bible, hence, the victory over them is half won before the spiritual and intellectual combat is engaged. On the other hand the difficulties within the ranks of the church itself are more formidable and exacting. He was not thinking so much of those duties and problems within his church, which are caused by sickness, sorrows, and providential griefs. Dr. West loved his people with a devotion akin to his Savior. Work for his congrega-

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tion in this direction gave him no cause for complaint, nor did duties in this capacity draw much upon his strength and he performed them with a smile. No night was too dark, no day too full, nor was his body too weary for him to refuse to go where there was a cry-call for him. To serve was no task but a tonic. But to always be on the alert to protect himself and the church's work from the interferences and obstructions caused by those whose aid he had a right to expect was the heart-breaking burden which ever hovered over him. He studied the plans for his church just as the head of a great business corporation studies the departments of his business concern. No living man or woman had the same deep interest in the progress of his church that he had, therefore, he was the expert in the affairs of the First Church of Tarrytown. He had come to look with dread upon suggestions made by even good members of his church, for fear these suggestions were made on the spur of the moment and not well thought out. A church cannot be run on one single idea, the entire realm of relations and circumstances must be reckoned with. After all it was not this group of half-thought-out suggestions made by well meaning members, that produced the silent heartaches, for he knew these people to be his friends and devoted members of the church.

That ever present small group in every man's church that really wants to clutter the road of the pastor, is his real test, and often this is done under the hypocritical guise of deep interest in the work. This would-be-church-boss or pastor-runner attempts to clothe himself in the garb of an angel of light. It was a happy circumstance that Pastor West had learned, at least, two other great lessons in his ten years in the pastorate. One of them was that the disturber is, in most cases, a man or woman whose life cannot bear the test of the white light of inspection. Go hunt out his or her record on the financial books of the church; go into the business or domestic sphere, and see if he or she has any right to throw rocks at another. The other lesson that the pastor had learned is that the great democratic majority of the church is true and helpful. The precious silent saints of God number ninety-nine out of every one hundred. If God's prophet will openly share his confidences with the people, practice no favoritism, never fight back but always fight upward with the glowing love of God in his heart, he will as surely reach the shining shore as the river sweeps on to the sea. The last expressed sentiment was the platform upon which Pastor West had been working for all his years in Tarrytown. He could minimize these causes of his problems and he could also

magnify the presence of God with him. It was apparent to all that Dr. West was a better preacher with each passing month. His congregations were all that could be hoped for. The young people loved him and honored him, and the older ones found him worthy of their confidence and co-operation. People who were seeking a church turned to him and his church, hence, more people joined his church than any other church in the city. These known facts spoke for themselves and gave Dr. West a comfort and assurance of God's approval in every conscious hour of his life.

It was Monday morning and the pastor came to his study about nine o'clock. Before he read his mail he asked Mrs. Black to bring him the records of the previous Sunday. He found that ten people had joined the church and that twenty-four new members were added to the Sunday School. For this he was grateful and uttered a sentence prayer of Thanksgiving. Now he must read his mail and then start out on the plans for next Sunday before the gathering, outside duties side-tracked him. Just then, his secretary came in saying that Rev. Mr. Boykin, the pastor of Sparta, a small town forty miles away, earnestly desired an interview, having driven in early that morning, as the cause was urgent. Notwithstanding the fact that his office

hours came later in the day, he always admitted out of town guests regardless of the hour. The visiting minister seated in the study soon came to the subject of the interview. There was a disturbance in the church at Sparta, and, while the difference at first was between only two of the members and had arisen over the kind of a hymn book the church should purchase, the disagreement had extended to two distinct factions in the church. The pastor had been an innocent bystander, but strange to say, all the church fueds eventually culminate at the pastor. He finally becomes the target of all factions, try as he may to protect himself. The story was told and the Sparta pastor related how he and the church requested Dr. West to come down that Wednesday evening and preach for them and aid them in settling a quarrel that threatened the life of a church and serious hurt to the pastor. Though busy that week, Pastor West agreed to go and the visiting minister went back at once to make full announcement of his coming on Wednesday night. When Dr. West arrived in Sparta, about noon on Wednesday, he learned further details of the hymn-book war. At first the two factions had each accused the pastor of being on the other side of their particular kind of book. To this charge the pastor was entirely in the clear and was able to appear before the opponents and demand that

he be permitted to show his neutrality. And this he did to the complete satisfaction of even inflamed minds. Still the pastor was not allowed to escape, so the charge was changed and both factions blamed him for not deciding their way, and the criticism was waged from that standpoint. Dr. West was fully armed with all these further details. While Dr. West had never passed through a great open church turmoil he knew enough about human nature to know that the best way to attack a thing is by the indirect method. He had always gone about his work by showing the bigger and better way. So, when he came to the service that night, he followed those tactics which will win almost every time. He announced for his text "Love seeketh not her own". In this sermon he presented the bigness of the man who had love and showed how love gave rather than sought self. He went from climax to climax always showing how Christ, who was the very head of their church, had illustrated his text many times in His work for us. Many times the audience was melted to tears as the great preacher led them into the very heart of an unselfish gospel. When he reached the proper point in his sermon he halted a moment and said: "My brethren, you have appointed this service and invited me to have a part in it in the hope that we might rise above a disturbance, which, though

starting from a small affair, has spread to hurtful proportions to this church and to this dear pastor, Brother Boykin. I do not come here to say anything against anybody, nor to fix any blame. I am eternally for the individual or group that is willing to manifest the love mentioned in this text and on the crest of that love see another's interest instead of his own. I must also say another thing which concerns the pastor of this church. I have the unimpeachable evidence that in the beginning of this unchristian dispute the pastor was unjustly charged, by these two sides, of being for the opposite. When this was cleared away, then you took another turn and flung your fury at him because he had not and would not elect your course. Thus you place this noble, over-burdened under-shepherd within the application of that old but expressive statement, 'Be damned if you do and be damned if you don't.' Furthermore, let me say to you that I am always with the preacher, right or wrong, and I am more for him when he is wrong than when he is right, and I have reached this conclusion after realizing that this is the only way friendship is worth anything; for when a man is wrong this is the only way to get him right. Furthermore you have tried to put on him your sins and turn him away to be your scape goat. Now, my friends, I believe you to be too noble

and too Christian to seek your own way and hurt others. Here you are in this beautiful little city of historic name. Settle all this, and let this church become one of historical usefulness." Then Dr. West asked them to sing, "Oh, love that will not let me go". They sang as never before in their lives, but the work was not yet finished. Dr. West then asked the big congregation to express itself. He was a man accustomed to getting results, and he wanted them now, so he invited all present, who would forget the past and forgive each other and pledge loyalty and co-operation with the pastor, to come forward and shake hands with him and Pastor Boykin. It took a long time to complete this part of the service for there was much weeping and talking as they met in the crowded altar, but every man, woman and child came and the Sparta church entered upon a new day of gladness and service to God. A committee was appointed to select the kind of hymn book and they met and unanimously agreed upon the book, and in plenty of time to go with a number of others who accompanied Dr. West to his train, which left for Tarrytown that same night at eleven o'clock.

The visit of so prominent a pastor as Dr. West to Sparta was within itself an event, but what took place at the church that night was a sensation. The

entire town knew of the hymn book trouble and considered the cause too little and childish for a church of high-minded people, and every outsider resented the injustice done to Pastor Boykin, yet, they had no recourse. But now that things had taken such a happy and quick turn Sparta had her chance to appear before the state in an Associated Press story. The reporter gave a full account to the big morning papers. The headliners on the streets of Tarrytown and other cities were made up of such expressions "Dr. West Curses About a Hymn Book". "A Prominent Pastor Endorses Wrong that Other Preachers Do." But as is always the case when you read all of a story you get a different view from that of the headlines. Dr. West did not curse, nor did he endorse wrong. He only used an old saying and further said he would help a fellow pastor who had been wrong. All these newspaper accounts gave one of the sub-secretaries of Dr. West's State Convention a chance for which he had been waiting. He did not like West, on account of some differences in the mission and educational policies, hence, the sub-secretary seized upon these expressions, in the headlines, in his attempt to show that West was a profane man and not pious. Thus, the secretary started his trip across the state with the secret intent of dropping a critical word in the ears of other pastors. But

like many another secretary this one was not posted. He did not realize that nine pastors out of every ten had been in the same false light which surrounded Rev. Sam Boykin of Sparta. They, therefore, hailed as their own champion such a man as West. He had said what they had felt and wanted to say. They had found a friend, though they might never meet him face to face. The secretary went back to headquarters and did not complete his trip, saying the weather was bad and he felt as though he might be ill. He got back just in time to save the editor of the denominational paper from publishing a curt and critical editorial on Dr. West's utterances at Sparta. He told the editor that the pastors and their friends were approving rather than condemning these brave words. He found that nearly all the preachers had wired or written West expressing their gratitude. This sub-secretary had started out by snarlingly and cynically referring to West as that "Super-friend of the Preacher", but he only used it twice before abandoning it, and for good reasons.

The latter part of the week Brother Boykin came in to see Dr. West and told him he had what purported to be a friendly and confidential letter from this same sub-secretary wanting to know all about West's visit and whether or not the language used was that

of a Christian gentleman. The real object of Boykin's visit was to express the hope that the visit which had done so much for him would in no sense reflect upon Dr. West. For this letter raised in his mind the unwelcome thought that somebody desired to use the recent visit and its outcome to the hurt of his noble friend. Pastor Boykin was evidently uneasy for the outcome to the man who had befriended him. Then Dr. West pointed to the two hundred letters and telegrams resting on his desk and with a smile said, "My dear Brother, I appreciate your deep concern. Your anxiety for me reveals an appreciative and a noble soul, but these letters and telegrams show that the great Brotherhood of this State consider my statements in your church their declaration of liberty. They have sent their thanks to me. When I heard from your lips of the possible disruption of your church over so small a matter as a hymn book, I smiled; when I saw in the great dailies that I was a profane man, I smiled some more, and when I heard that the sub-secretary had started a veiled tour against me, I smiled again and again, and now I am determined to smile on and to smile through."

CHAPTER XIII

Postponement of a Long Cherished Visit

MONG the friends that were made by Dr. and Mrs. West during their seminary days, were Rev. and Mrs. George Strong, who lived in the adjoining apartment to the Wests. Like the Wests, the Strongs entered the school of the Prophets after they were married and had one son. The days of hardship and strict economy created many things in common between these two student families. George Strong began life as a lawyer, but finally gave up what promised to be a great legal career in order that he might preach the gospel. He had graduated from one of the best colleges of the state, and was therefore well equipped to enter the Seminary and take his place along with the best students. Mrs. Strong was a child of one of the best homes in her community. She, also, was a college woman and possessed that grace of mind and heart which good breeding and piety can produce. When her husband decided to give up his law office and enter the ministry, she surrendered with foreboding, more on account of the boy than anything else. She real-

ized that it meant three more years of school, with limited quarters and no outlet to the world. She was in no sense rebellious, but on the other hand she dreaded the school days as well as all the days that must follow. In addition to culture, Mrs. Strong had beauty and personal charm; always radiating good cheer and sunshine. Her heart might be breaking, but to the outsider her life could still be a series of smiles. As the Seminary days progressed, Mr. and Mrs. Strong decided that when school was over they wanted to go out in the southwestern section of the nation and be pioneers in those destitute and lonely borders. The work out there was not self-supporting, hence, it must be maintained by the national Board of Missions. In addition to all of this, life out there was hard and comforts unknown. The very nature of the whole situation was uninviting from all human standpoints. But there was a lure about it to two young workers, and they determined to make the sacrifice and go.

When the years of school were over, the paths of the Wests and Strongs divided and each family began life anew in their respective fields. Through all these years, they kept up a correspondence, besides the church papers kept each informed of the movements and toils of the other. Many times George Strong earnestly urged Dr. West to come out from

his city pastorate and spend a whole month in that great open world, visiting the various mission stations and little churches along the western border. Pastor and Mrs. West had their plans all perfected for the visit, having arranged for one of the church families to keep Ruth and Alex. Mrs. West looked forward to this trip with the glee of a girl, but just as they were nearing the starting time other circumstances arose forcing a postponement, and to the disappointment of all concerned the visit was delayed for one year, but not abandoned.

The Tarrytown pastor was not easily swerved from his plans, but it was too evident that God was maturing the hour in which Dr. West could see the fulfillment of his dream. He was not willing to neglect the opportunity even though he had to wait another year to see George Strong and the work of God in the mission field of the Rio Grande. Dr. Harvester had just died and Miriam Hope Cooper had given fifty thousand dollars for the project of his dreams; he had just found a new friendship in the hearts of his fellow pastors on account of the hymn book affair at Sparta, and the State Convention was only three months off. Dr. West had presented his annuity plan for the "Veteran's Reward" at the three previous Conventions only to have his plans ignored or postponed, but with the great gift, and the new

friendship of the pastors, he felt that his hour was about to strike. He now felt that the ninety days leading up to the Convention was his opportunity. Dr. West was a friend to the work of the Convention and honored all the leaders and secretaries, despite the fact that there was a mild sentiment abroad that he was not in sympathy with the organized work. He felt the injustice of this condition. He had never failed to co-operate with their program, therefore, it was difficult for him and his friends to understand just why he was held at arms-length. Every time he would present his "Veteran's Reward", he would be politely waved aside, and some would go so far as to derisively call him a "life insurance agent". These insinuations had the deeper sting since the advocate of this movement felt so keenly the justness of his cause. To disarm his critics he had publicly announced that if this plan was ever adopted he would decline to share or participate in its benefits and would die like Harvester, if he could only be used to serve his brethren in the ministry. It could not be said that the Convention and its leaders were afraid of Dr. West. They rather ignored than feared him. The only ground upon which any of them could or would entertain an element of fear was that the platform upon which he worked might of its own inherent merits become

the platform of others, and the rising tide of opinion which moves of its own initiative become the views of the denomination. In this case the Convention would become a victim of a general and not a personal movement.

Those who have followed the career of Dr. West thus far will have no difficulty in seeing the reasons which contributed to his awkward relation to all the policies of the leaders. He was not an antagonist. No bitter words escaped his lips. We must, therefore, look for the real reasons by which to explain his attitude and the attitude of others. It is only fair that we present his position upon the work of his denomination and let the public judge of the merits of the case. First of all, Dr. West did not believe that the so called causes of the Convention presented the same ground of appeal to the members of the denomination. He could not see that a great rich state in which there were four thousand churches of his denomination, to say nothing of the other denominations, presented the same basis of appeal as did a great dark Christian continent of four hundred millions of hopeless souls beyond the sea. Yet, this very year the State Convention had given three dollars to one in favor of State Missions as against Foreign Missions. Why should the church in this state go afield for money to

build and endow big denominational universities which teach nothing different from the State Institutions? West could look the wage earner, the seamstress and the banker in the eye and ask for money with which to take the saving messages of Christ to dying souls, but he was halted in his appeal when he attempted to ask the struggling masses for money for great universities, the walls of which their children would never see. More withering still was the thought that in some cases these very denominational universities destroyed belief in the Book and in the God of their humble tithe. If this appeal were being made for the Junior College, which school meets the formative period of the youth's life, then the reasons would be more justifiable and Christian. That unmatched and democratic system of education known as the public school furnishes to all alike a thrilling preparation for college, and the Junior College gives the right foundation, allowing the state schools for which the people were already taxed to do the rest.

It was further known that the position of Dr. West, in the realm of beneficence, was conformity to a system. This was made stronger since the Convention itself had adopted a budget system and asked the churches to conform to this plan. The church at Tarrytown had entered obediently into this plan

with good faith. The Every Member Canvass was made with the promise to the people that this subscription represented the work of the year. In less than sixty days appeals were being made for extra offerings to be counted "over and above". These calls came to the Sunday School, the women's organizations, and even the sacred days like "Mother's Day" were capitalized and coined into money, the appeals being always to the very people who had subscribed in the Every Member Canvass. Dr. West was sincere in trying to save the Convention officials from the folly of violating their own program, but they interpreted it as a failure to co-operate.

On one occasion Dr. West spoke for ten minutes before a regional Conference in his section, advocating the independence of the local church and pleading that the churches have a voice in making the plans, rather than for the Convention and committees to send out the mandates. In this he cited the practices of the New Testament churches. This was interpreted as disloyalty to the Lord's work. But it was never intended as a disturbing thought on the part of Dr. West. He was simply calling attention to the importance of getting back on the more scriptural basis of doing their work. But the suspicious are always alert in forming opinions, and Pastor West was thought of as being against the Conven-

tion. Dr. West did not attempt to conceal the fact that he considered it a wrong principle, as well as a poor financial policy, to have sub-organizations of a local church turn themselves into money raising machines. He believed in these organizations as groups for study, enlistment, inspiration and information but when the time for paying of the tithe and making an offering arrived it was the business of the church to do it all together and on the first day of the week.

Another thing which contributed to the supposed lack of interest on the part of Dr. West to the general work was the fact that he did not take part in the Convention discussions, other than to fill the parts which were assigned him. He had a timidity, even an aversion to be constantly volunteering to make a speech and indulging in complimentary platitudes of this secretary and that one. On the other hand he gladly performed any duty which they asked of him and thus contributed to the sum total of all their work. It was his nature to keep silent and never enter into any caucus to bring himself or his friends into the public eye.

As we have seen, it was just three months before the annual Convention was to meet at La Fonte, a small city of the State, but a resort city with plenty of hotels and a good public hall. It was con-

sidered a very attractive and desirable place to meet. It was a matter of concern to Dr. West just how the opportunity would come to him to present anew his old plea for the "Veteran's Reward". He had attempted this on many other occasions, but this time he felt armed as never before with the well known points of vantage that had recently come to him. He did not fear the outcome; the opportunity was the one thing needful. The program was always crowded and to get a good hour to make his speech was what he wanted. How to obtain this chance occupied his serious thought and on this he could not get any clear course of action.

Another month passed by and he could not, plan as he would, get before his mind just the open door he wanted. If he attempted to push in between discussions of the other great subjects of the Convention it might prejudice his cause and thus encompass his defeat. If he tried to bring so important an unofficial theme to the attention of the messengers during the hour set apart for miscellaneous matters, he would not have sufficient time. He decided to look over the program of the previous Convention and see if a suggestion would present itself as to what point in a similar program would give him the best advantage. He rang for Mrs. Black and asked her to find the journal of the last year's convention.

When she brought the journal he asked her to find the page on which appeared the former program. He looked it over and in a half unconscious and casual way expressed his intent in studying the proceeding of the previous year. The secretary stood waiting, thinking there might be a further request. Seeing her standing, Dr. West in his uncertain state of mind said, "Mrs. Black, I am trying to find a place in the program of the approaching Convention at La Fonte to present my old time plea for the aged preachers. It looks hopeless. If the committee would only put me on to discuss any theme I would use some of that time for a presentation of the subject which lies so close to my heart." Then he said to his secretary "That is all, I thank you". Mrs. Black returned to her office and to her work but she could not get the high, holy desire of the pastor out of her mind. Of course, she knew of his previous attempts; she also knew of the long pathetic sufferings of Dr. and Mrs. Harvester, and she would be glad if a new day would come to the old preacher, as he approached the end of his journey. On her own responsibility Mrs. Black wrote the Foreign Mission secretary a letter and explained just how happy the Tarrytown congregation was over a great address which Dr. West had recently made in his own church on Foreign Missions. She casually men-

tioned how glad she would be if the whole state could hear it. This letter did its work, but it was after the Convention before Dr. West knew of that innocent but effective letter, written by a loyal member of the church staff. Within five days there was a letter to Dr. West from the Foreign Mission secretary asking him if he would discuss the subject of Foreign Missions the second night of the approaching Convention. It seemed providential and so it was. The second night was the best hour of the Convention, but he must not slight this great theme even to present his own. A new problem had thus arisen in his mind. Soon, however, Dr. West found his course of action. He dictated a letter to the Foreign Mission secretary saying that he would be glad to speak on the subject, provided he would be allowed one hour instead of the thirty minutes which had been allotted to this theme. He doubted if this request would be granted as others would have to be reckoned with. The Foreign Mission secretary took the matter up with the program committee and they finally agreed and Dr. West was so notified. Dr. West saw his hour approaching and as much as he, his wife and the Strongs were disappointed by the postponement of the long planned visit to their mission fields, Dr. West, at least, felt that the delay was justified.

CHAPTER XIV

It Was a Trick and Dr. West Turned It

THE second day of the La Fonte Convention had arrived. A spirit of joy and good fellowship characterized the messengers, partly due to the fact that the accommodations were so comfortable in the health resort place. The Convention was largely attended and the heavy debts upon most of the boards did not seem to weigh very heavily upon the majority of the messengers. Dr. West was a decided favorite with a certain great group. He was admired for his transparent sincerity and for his conscious power in his lines of conviction. When the Convention assembled that morning, it was noticed that the crowd was much larger than that of the first day. This was perfectly natural as many of the people arrived after the Convention had started and scarcely anyone left until the third day. The secretaries and officials of the Convention were on cordial relations with Dr. West and knew that in a most emphatic sense he was a friend to all the work, therefore, they greeted him in a fraternal spirit which was graciously returned,

but at no time did these officials and connectional men take him into their confidence and council.

Since coming to Tarrytown, Dr. West had not missed a meeting of the State Convention, therefore, he knew most of the brethren and he also knew just the men and messages that were usually to the fore. The Convention opened that morning on time and the great auditorium was filled. Much important business was crowded into the sessions of the day. Dr. West was carrying in his soul his own sacred task and responsibility. Being deeply interested in the subject of Foreign Missions and desiring to satisfy the secretary who had asked him to discuss this important theme, he had spent days and even weeks in his preparation. He alone knew that he must crowd into thirty minutes what others thought he was to spend an hour upon. To spend the last thirty minutes upon a subject which was not supposed to be discussed, and hold the supporting interest of the Convention required the wisest tact and the most winsome manner of speech. In all of his ministry and public speaking he never faced a crisis like this, hence, the whole day he was meditative and prayerful. His desire for food was gone as he contemplated the issue. Would this apparent trick of the orator make or mar his plan? He knew of certain speeches which had turned the tide of human

thinking and won for the advocate his case. He despised tricks and sharp turns, but what other road was open to him? Deeply did he feel that the ease and comfort of hundreds and eventually thousands of God's worn out preachers were looking to him for bread, so he gathered strength and reassurance as the night came on. At seven-thirty that night the moderator called the Convention to order which was followed by singing and prayer. Then several reports were read and certain general items were cleared away. The Foreign Mission secretary took charge and reviewed some of the problems before his Board. He also mentioned some of the achievements of the year's work. In presenting the speaker of the evening, he called attention to the well known success of Dr. West for many years in Tarrytown. He hinted at the increased esteem that had come to many of the pastors in consequence of his aid in the Sparta affair. He then presented Dr. West. The occasion was full of tenseness partly because of the interest which was attached to the great subject and partly because of the strangely powerful man who was to speak.

"Brother Moderator and brethren of the Convention, on the request of the Foreign Mission secretary, I appear before you tonight. Because of the importance of the subject I am glad to serve him,

you and God. No part of your great official work, up to this hour, holds the same charm for me as does the work overseas. To send the gospel to the dark continents is the thrill of the Christian church. If God has left us one task sufficiently unselfish to manifest the spirit of Christ, it is the work of Foreign Missions. The task and endeavors of state, home and local work might have something of the selfishness of human nature, but not so with sending the gospel to the heathen. Schools and education can wait for another day but not the millions dying without Christ. In addition to all this, the evangelization of the great dark world is the one movement which challenges the mettle of the church and gives her a duty worthy of her power and the greatness of our God. Why pass by our big Christ-like work and spend our money and men on the lesser task?"

For thirty minutes the subject of Foreign Missions was discussed by a master mind from a burning heart. No messenger to that Convention who possessed the Missionary spirit could gainsay one word of the address, although it was apparent that a few were afraid of the effect upon some local projects. To these the speech was too strong and too convincing, but it was equally evident that the great majority of the Convention had waited and prayed for this

hour. Pausing for just a moment the great preacher turned to the moderator and said: "Brother President, it was given me to put this discussion into thirty minutes and I have acquitted myself before God and man and I have thirty minutes of my time left. Will you and the Convention allow me that time to speak of a subject more meaningful than that of Foreign Missions?"

In asking that permission Dr. West appeared a veritable Appollo. The very daring of such a request, the mystery of the new theme and the spell of his eloquence brought the immediate consent of moderator and audience. This was expressed by handclapping, waving of handkerchiefs and "Amen" all over the house.

"Now that I have your consent I stand in my own rights for thirty minutes". Voices all over the house shouted "Make it two hours", "Go on". "Thank you, dear fellows, I will try to finish in thirty minutes. Many of you know that the one subject that has been most on my heart for many years is that of the 'Veteran's Reward.' To provide for the men who have spent their lives in building our denomination, when they can no longer labor, is the first and supreme duty and ought to be the joy of our lives. I have seen these old preachers, of refined and cultured souls, drag themselves to your little 'Old

Minister's Relief Board,' there to be informed that only eight dollars a month was the maximum that they could hope to receive as the funds had been meager. These same suffering and lonely veterans of the Cross take the little stipend and, when back at the little shack in which they are spending their last days, take the eight dollars and hold it out with trembling hand to the sainted wife and ask her whether or not they should buy bread or beans that day, for they could not afford both. Sitting there in that same little house these two noble but neglected lovers of the Lord would recount the happy days when they loved and labored in the foundation work of the long ago, but how now in contrast they were only mendicants at the doors of a great and growing denomination. This picture, my brethren, is not overdrawn. My eyes have looked upon the scene, and my ears have heard their story.

"Now I want to present to you my plan: I am asking this Convention to create a fund of one million dollars as the business back ground of this new and forward looking movement. This million dollars will be the reserve fund by which the Convention can finance its policies. This million dollars can be raised within two years by taking this cause to the people. In addition to this, regular insurance policies can be issued to every active pastor and missionary

worker at a lower premium rate than in any insurance company. The pastor or missionary would be required to pay two per cent of his present salary on the premium, and the Convention, Board or church pay the other eight per cent, thus completing the ten per cent of the regular salary to the premium, which actuaries assure us, would take full care of the business. On this basis the minister or missionary would receive one-half of the amount of his average annual salary covering his active ministry, when he has reached the age of sixty-five. No age limit would be placed upon the one who desires to enter into this Veteran's Annuity. As an example, if a given preacher received an average annual salary of three thousand dollars, when he reaches sixty-five he would draw fifteen hundred dollars per year until his death. Furthermore, if he dies before or after reaching the age of sixty-five, his wife will receive his allotment in full during her life time. This plan further provides that the dependent children shall each receive sufficient for their support and education; this exact amount is not at this time fully determined. My brethren, this may seem to you a vague and impractical arrangement, but allow me to assure you that it is the mature conclusion of some of the best business men of this state and other states. It

only remains for us to take hold of these suggestions and put them into practical execution.

"Now allow me to spend the rest of my time in endeavoring to inspire you to action. Men are naturally reluctant in attempting to sail an uncharted sea, or travel an unblazed trail. Therefore, I am attaching no blame to any man who halts at my plan. But my fellow-laborers, we can wait no longer in beginning this movement. Our disgrace has hovered over us too long now. The great business and industrial companies of the country pension their worn out servants and they do it in such a manly and noble way that the retired railroad conductor holds his head up and walks this earth with the same dignity as does the president of the road. What is true of the railroad employee is true of every other worthwhile business in this world. The day our Convention performs this task, that day we take our place with those concerns with which we are worthy to walk. I boldly say that this is the most important task in which we can engage. No preacher can make money for himself and give his undivided attention to his ministry, and a divided interest will not succeed in the exacting labors of the Gospel. Furthermore, a Christian worker, be he a preacher or missionary, can not be free to do the most efficient work if his mind is looking out to that day of dread which

leads to public charity or the county poor house. As matters now stand there is no haven at the sunset of life for you and me. To be sure, God has prepared a heaven for us but what are we to do during those lonely hours that we wait at the dock before the Old Ship of Zion sets sail? The one fact that holds young men back from heeding God's call and entering the ministry is this very spectre of want when old age comes. It is not the entrance but the exit to the ministry that makes it unattractive. I call upon every preacher, missionary and laymen in this great hall to honor himself and his God by voting this night to create a commission of nine of your finest members to take this new and unmatched work and plan it to the glory of God and to the service of the manse dwellers.

"I must close by taking you on a visit to the little rented cottage in the suburban grove of Tarrytown where I live and love and labor. A few years after I came to the pastorate of the First Church, my able predecessor yielded to the infirmity of age in his work in another city and retired to this little cottage in my city. Though hundreds had been led to Christ and many other hundreds had been blessed all over this state by his wonderful ministry, there was no one to shelter and feed Dr. Henry Harvester and his beautiful wife, save a little woman, Miriam

Hope, their granddaughter, who taught school. I saw blooming youth staggering under the load; I saw the pathos of aged dependence and I saw indictment of a rich and powerful denomination which had done no more than prepare shrouds and graves for these white-souled veterans. My God! Brethren, may my selfish soul be photographed to the sneering world and may my little life be exposed to the contempt and derision of a just public condemnation, if I do less than my best to relieve this narrow policy of our Convention."

Dr. West paused for a brief moment. His speech had done its work and the Convention awaited his will. He drew from his pocket a paper. "This movement has already begun. The dead hand of a preacher thrusts this paper back from the potter's field. In this, as in every other great work for God and the church, the man who starts it and sacrifices for it, is the preacher. I often hear a great deal of pious talk about the 'good of the cause' but I say to you tonight that the preacher is the very 'cause' itself. A manuscript upon which Dr. Harvester worked for years was not accepted until after his death, that is, the information did not reach his house before he left. The publishers paid to Miriam Hope Cooper one hundred thousand dollars for all rights. Immediately, this child of the manse brought me fifty

thousand dollars with which to begin this foundation of a million. I shall present this to the commission when it has been fully and officially created."

The restrained feelings of the great crowd could no longer be held back. Men clapped their hands, cried, laughed and shouted. Miriam was called for but she was on her belated honey-moon trip with Arch Cooper. The spirit of Dr. Harvester was called down, but he was up in heaven. The maiden name of Mrs. Harvester was called, Naomi Celeste Harvester. The nearest response to that call was an elderly sister of Mrs. Harvester who lived in La Fonte and who attended the Convention that night. Some of the messengers recognized her and bore her to the platform, and there she stood neatly but plainly dressed with a dear little bonnet gracing her head. The crowd asked for a speech. She declared that to be impossible but said if they would forgive her she would sing for them. In all the history of the Convention there had never been such an hour. Cheers and "Amens" gave way to absolute silence and the dear little woman sang.

"My latest sun is sinking fast,
My race is nearly run;
My strongest trials now are past,
My triumph is begun.

O come, angel band, come and around me
stand,
O, bear me away on your snowy wings
To my immortal home;
O, bear me away on your snowy wings
To my immortal home.

I've almost gained my heav'nly home,
My spirit loudly sings:
Thy holy ones, behold, they come:
I hear the noise of wings."

When the song was over one of the leaders moved that the recommendations of Dr. West be referred to the various Convention Boards and that they report at the next Convention. "No" cried a dozen voices from the floor. "Start the movement now", came from all over the house. A brother by the name of Simpson, an honored pastor in the northern part of the state obtained the floor and walked to the platform and with clear voice born of conviction and assurance said, "I move that this Convention here and now authorize and appoint a commission to be known as the 'Commission on Veteran's Reward' and that they be instructed to proceed at once to plan this work along the lines outlined by Dr. West in his speech, and that Dr. West be the chair-

man of the commission". A dozen men were on their feet to second the motion. When the motion was put to the Convention, every vote cast was for it, but a few did not vote. It was now ten o'clock and after the singing of a hymn the benediction was pronounced by Dr. Fielder, the Foreign Mission Secretary.

CHAPTER XV

Men and Money

THE Convention was over, and, during the four weeks that had passed since its close, the denominational press as well as the secular papers had their columns well filled with a discussion of the new board with Dr. West as its head. Deacon Bush was much disturbed and irritated over the honor and financial trust granted to Dr. West. Bush had a fixed notion that preachers knew nothing about finances. He capitalized this idea, as many good men labor under the same delusion about preachers. Deacon Bush thought he saw an opportunity to deal many blows against West along this line. The fact that the pastor had been made chairman of a commission to raise and expend a million dollars gave the deacon his chance. The two members of the church boards who had been more or less in sympathy with Bush in his attacks on the pastor were the first ones he approached. He invited these two men and their wives to dine with him one evening. When the occasion arrived, a most elegant dinner was prepared and the two men, Deacon Lester

Finch and Trustee David Bomar were on hand. Bush knew that he must proceed cautiously. He remembered that they voted with him when he first opposed the Forward Movement of Pastor West, he also knew that the same two men had shifted their positions and at times they were with Dr. West and the majority, on other occasions. So Mr. Bush was gracious and complimentary during the entire evening. After the dinner was over bridge tables were set and several games of cards were played. At a well timed moment, the host asked the ladies to excuse the men and they withdrew into the deacon's den. To introduce the subject Deacon Bush showed a letter from a well-known state leader, in which Dr. West was criticized and in which it was plainly intimated that he was not a worthy man to lead so great a movement as the "Veteran's Reward". It was clearly another case of when a state leader does not like a pastor he will search out the disaffected member of the pastor's church and make friends with him. Of course, Deacon Lynch and Trustee Bomar entered heartily into the opinion of Mr. Bush for they were his guests and they had not only eaten at his table, but they had played cards with him. But before we go further with this eventful evening let it here be recorded that these three men were short sighted. They could not foresee that when the plot of this

evening is revealed they would be discounted before an honest and honorable church, for when men are gathered at a card table they have not the slightest chance to discredit the work of God's prophet. The rattle of the cards will sound too loudly in the ears of the church for the members to hear the criticism by the players. If they had been prayer meeting officers the church might have listened.

Anyway, Deacon Bush laid the letter aside and proceeded to tell Lynch and Bomar that something must be done to stop any further activity of Dr. West with this commission. Not that he cared anything about the Convention's movement, but anything to interfere with the pastor. He induced these two men to agree to aid him anything he might project in the next Board meeting of the church. The evening ended as it began with mutual compliments and exchange of good will and fellowship.

On the next day Lynch and Bomar told their wives what took place in the den, and after talking and thinking for a few days both men reached the conclusion that the whole dinner occasion was for a purpose on the part of Bush, and each man decided that he was going to have nothing to do with the scheme and each determined that he was not going to be bought and used by Bush and frankly told him so. But Deacon Bush was not to be thwarted

in this move, though he realized that he had lost much ground. Bush was a man of large means and held stock in two of the largest banks in Tarrytown. He had it in his power and influence to help or hinder certain of the smaller business men of the church, so he decided to use that leverage to control some of the men of the church who had been and were now loyal supporters of Dr. West. This time he decided to use some of the officers of the banks by sending them to certain of these smaller business men to suggest to them that if they wished accommodations at these banks they had better listen to Deacon Bush as the banks would, in turn, listen to him. On this new line of procedure Mr. Bush got in some powerful strokes. One or two of these men felt that while they wanted to be loyal to the pastor, their own business was at stake and they had better be careful with whom they sided, regardless of right or wrong. When Deacon Bush heard through these bank officers just how effective this method was working he smiled assuredly and wondered why he had not thought of that trick long ago. But like all dark and unworthy schemes it was not universally accepted. When Deacon Bush approached Ralph Ragland, a leading jeweler of the city, he at once realized that he had pressed his veiled bribery plan too far, or at least he feared he had. Bush had aided Ragland in financing his business for several

years and considered that the jeweler was under obligation to him as well as in need of his business aid in the future. Ralph Ragland was not a deacon but was an active and influential member of the church. His store was attractive and the proprietor was a genial gentleman, which gave him a strategic place in the life of the city. Bush realized that if Ragland could be prejudiced against the pastor he would have a real reinforcement. The deacon said to Ragland: "If you will aid me in the work of the church, I will assure you here and now that your business will never suffer and that you can enlarge it whenever you desire." Mr. Bush knew that Ragland had been hoping to extend his business, hence, he approached him through this coveted plan. The jeweler quietly said that he would think it over and report later. The deacon patted the jeweler on the shoulder and went his way.

Mr. Ragland was disturbed the rest of the day. Torn between fear and resentment, he knew that very soon he would need the aid of the bank in which Bush was a leading factor. He loved his business and he had great joy in seeing it grow from year to year. Towards evening, he caught a new vision of honor and that outshone the brightest diamond on earth. That night he related the occurrence to his wife and two children, Ralph, Jr., who was sixteen years old, and Clara who had just passed her thir-

teenth year. As they discussed the intimation of Deacon Bush, and as his scheme for undermining the work of Pastor West was dissected, the family group became more and more resentful. Finally, young Ralph, who was taller than his father, rose to his feet, and said: "Rather than have you sell out to old man Bush I would prefer to see you go to the poor house, and I will support Mother and Sister". Clara laid aside her books, looked into her father's face and said: "If consistency is a jewel, let us have a jewelry store in our hearts. I am with Brother, only you shall not go to the poor house". Then Ragland asked his wife how she was going to vote and she said she had always stood with her husband, but if on this occasion she must cast the deciding vote she would be forced to take the position of her children. Then the light broke, the shadows fled away, and Ragland said in a firm voice, "I make it unanimous."

The next morning Ralph Ragland sang on his way to the store. After the mail had been opened and read, Mr. Ragland then dictated the following letter:

"Mr. Solomon Bush,

"Director First National Bank,

"City.

"My dear Sir:

"Following our conversation of yesterday with reference to your promise to continue or even enlarge your bank's support of my business on a certain condition, I have given the matter serious thought. I even took it up with my family last night, and after consulation with them I have the honor of declining your offer. I have no objection to doing business with your bank on the same high and unconditional basis on which former transactions have been handled, but I cannot and will not allow my church life and privileges to be involved.

"In the past I have faithfully met my obligations with you and feel that I have been worth as much to you as you have been to me. Banks need customers as much as customers need banks.

"Before closing this letter of notification to you, allow me to further say that if you attempt to embarrass me at the other banks, should I fail to accede to your scheme, as you intimated yesterday, then I will appeal my case to the public and, failing there, I have the rights of an American citizen in the courts of justice.

"Trusting I have made my statement clear as it is final,

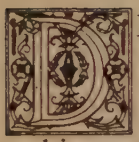
"I beg to be,
"Yours truly,
"Ralph Ragland."

When Deacon Bush opened and read the above letter the clerks in his office declared that he groaned as a man who is in deep pain. He left and was not seen in his office all day. When Sunday came, he was at the door of the church as usual trying to make merry with each one who entered.

Foiled in two or three attempts to purchase his helpers, he had found that real men are bigger than money.

CHAPTER XVI

Out of a Clear Sky



R. WEST had been out of the city nearly two weeks touring the State in the interest of the "Veteran's Reward." He returned to his study on Friday morning of the second week, in high, happy mood. His trip had been successful, for pastors and congregations, where he had spoken, were in full accord with his campaign. More than two hundred thousand of the million dollars had been secured since the meeting of the Convention in which his commission had been created. It was now clear that before the next Convention he would see half of the amount fully raised. Two years had been the time limit set for finishing the task. On that Friday morning the pastor was happy and hopeful. He greeted all the office force and they were glad to see him back. He was the fine moving spirit among all, and every one of them was loyal to him. He even sought out Black Jerry and greeted him by saying, "Hello, Jerry, did you run everything well while I was gone?" Jerry grunted and said, "Doctor, I done de best I could, but it seems de Lawd done hid away hisself when you goes off." Dr. West laughed but did not catch the significance

of Jerry's remark, "The Lord hides away when you go off."

On the previous Sunday the pastor had left his pulpit to be filled by his assistant, Dr. David B. Stamps, who usually took the duties of the pastor in his absence. Dr. Stamps was not a regular preacher in the accepted meaning of the term. He had taken his degree at the State Denominational College, but it was the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. He was a man of religious feeling and turned toward the life of a lay-preacher. He was highly educated and a person of charm and culture. He was finely fitted to do the kind of work that was needed in the Tarrytown Church. He was popular and influential, always knowing his place and filling it. He was devoted to Dr. West and did his best to help forward every movement of the church. This young assistant seemed to have been just the man for the place, and Dr. West considered himself fortunate. He had held the place of assistant for several years and was clearly conversant with all the program of Dr. West and the church, and both had his sympathy, so far as he knew how to give it.

When the morning greeting was over, Dr. West settled himself in his study and soon was getting his sermons for the following Sunday. After lunch he was ready to dictate some important letters, so he

asked Mrs. Black to come in. When the dictation was finished, he asked her just how the affairs of the church had gone during his absence. Mrs. Black, who had been with the church since he came, was easily the best person from whom he could get the real facts. She was one of those quiet, loyal souls who could see from the heart. In addition to being an incomparable secretary, she was a "buffer" who preferred to take the blows intended for another and bear them herself. She was also a great discerner, and knew what things should be reported, but never in the spirit of tattling. So that Friday afternoon she gave a report of the sermon preached by Dr. Stamps the preceding Sunday. Though unintended, the sermon was clearly radical and dangerous. Dr. Stamps disclosed the fact that he believed there were parts of the Bible not inspired, and he took the position of the naturalist. Of course, all of this was a grief to the pastor, for he loved Stamps; besides, he at once could see the danger of exposing the minds of the young people to such serious error spoken by one so popular as the young assistant. Here was a new and surprising problem. His first thought was to interview Stamps, and, if he found the report to be correct, to see to it that he leave the position promptly. But two facts deterred him. If possible, he wanted to save Stamps, and besides he knew it

would cause friction to discharge so popular a man. So Dr. West decided to wait for further developments, and also to see what had been the impression made on the church. The words of Black Jerry now began to unfold to him. "The Lord hides when you go away." Had Stamps hidden the Lord in his naturalistic interpretation of the scriptures? Sunday came and a larger congregation greeted the returning pastor. His sermon, preached on the subject, "The Rock of the Holy Scriptures," was timely and well received. Many of the devout members wept as they spoke to him of the words of Stamps on the previous Sunday. On the other hand, he heard a few echoes of how it pleased many of the younger people. This gave Pastor West an additional alarm. So the wise course was followed. The pastor first made an investigation as to what influence had worked to produce this effect upon his young assistant. He did not have to go far to find out that one or two of the favorite teachers in the Denominational College in the state had planted the seed in the mind of the young student and now the flower and fruit were in evidence. To Dr. West, here was one of the most serious things in the Christian and State Education of the day.

The usual routine of the church went on for several weeks and Pastor West was hearing so much of

this new doctrine that he saw some move must be made or all would be lost. Finally he asked Stamps to spend the morning in the study. The conversation was opened by Pastor West, who assured Stamps of his love and esteem. He also told him how he wanted to help and save him from these errors. Stamps was frank and open. He told the pastor how these thoughts were given him in college and how the modern trend of education was to throw away the old traditions, so that in this sermon he was only reproducing what many young men were absorbing in their college life. After the whole morning spent together, Dr. West asked Stamps if he would not write out his full belief and submit it to him within a week's time. To this request Stamps agreed and they were to meet in the study one week from that day for further discussion.

The week passed and now they are face to face with the written creed, which is as follows: "Jesus was born of a human father and mother. He was divine only as are other men. He was the greatest of prophets and ethical teachers. He attained the highest degree of trust in God. We are to imitate His religious life. He is Himself not the object of religious trust and worship. His recorded miracles are mainly myths and fictions, the imaginings of fond disciples. In some cases of healing He exerted

a kind of magnetic power, such as we often observe today in certain so-called 'divine healers.' There was no real resurrection and ascension. There was, doubtless, belief in the resurrection, but it was based on manifestations like those of modern spiritualism. They were simply psychic phenomena of a subjective kind. There was no objective ground of forgiveness in His death on the cross. He taught that God forgives the penitent and desires fellowship with men, but other prophets taught the same. Christ's present influence is like that of many great men who have lived. It is mediated to us through the gospels, especially the Sermon on the Mount and related ethical teachings. The New Testament records themselves are conglomerates of a little truth and a great deal of fiction drawn from the surrounding ethenic religions, or the imagination of the writers themselves."

After this statement had been read and understood by West and Stamps, the pastor said to his assistant: "Stamps, are you willing to let me read this to the church next Sunday morning, so the members of our church may know and understand your position just as you and I know it?" Stamps, being a man of open and candid mind, gladly consented to the request. The conversation between these two church leaders was so fraternal and cordial, it was evident that whatever the outcome, these men would remain

personal friends. They both knew that intellectual and theological verities would prosper best in an open and thoroughly understood statement.

Following the Sunday morning service, the statement was read to the church. It's reading produced a strange effect. Instead of division and hate, the evident feeling was that of regret, sympathy and the spirit of prayer. One could easily see that the occasion was not one of contest between West and Stamps, it was conflict between Stamps and Revelation. As one of the members put it, "Not that we love Stamps less, but we love the Bible and God more."

The church was heart-broken and bewildered. So far as West was personally concerned, he saw that he was safe from the results that might follow, but he was not hunting for individual victory, rather he was seeking the triumph of truth and the saving of his young comrade from the withering touch of "Naturalistic Philosophy."

After the church had spent an hour in prayer and meditation, they all went home with tear-bathed faces and trusting hearts, having left the entire matter with Dr. West to settle, knowing his mastery in the hour of crisis, and having seen his great leadership before, the church knew it could safely trust him in this one.

CHAPTER XVII

Thrilling Story of Six Months

N the hard, drab duties of life we do not expect to find much of what the world calls a thrill. This is more especially true when these duties involve the gathering of money by contributions, however worthy the cause that makes the appeal. But the actor of these six months was Dr. West, who goes on the theory that whatever is right and ought to be done, can be done. The delay of getting into the field for the purpose of completing his campaign of five hundred thousand dollars for the "Veteran's Reward" was caused by the demand made upon his time by regular, as well as by unexpected duties. He was just seeing his labor of love succeeding when there occurred the surprising interference caused by the unfortunate affair of Dr. Stamps. He could not ignore this false teaching among the members of his church, for soon it would eat itself into the very heart of all that he had been building. Hence, for some time this problem demanded care and patience. But that being settled and his splendid helper saved from a deadening

error, the church was now marching on in the orthodox highway. Time was short for doing this big task, but Dr. West was happy that the way was clear for action. During these six months he would be forced to be away from his home church most of the time. He could not hope to preach in his own pulpit more than two Sundays a month during this period leading up to the Convention, which meets in Dr. West's church the approaching autumn. When a pastor of a great church is torn between two duties, he is forced back upon the promises of God with new confidence and faith. Just what Deacon Bush and his two or three weak followers would attempt in his absence was hard to say. The pastor did feel a sense of security, however, in that Dr. Stamps had so completely turned from his theological deflections, making him doubly loyal to the great, generous chief, who had lovingly spent some time in a re-study of the old faith with him. Dr. Stamps had seen into the deep soul of Dr. West in a way that he never could have done if this experience had been denied him. In addition to the fine attitude of Dr. Stamps there was the rest of the church with its officers supporting the pastor at home and praying for him in the greatest movement ever undertaken by the denomination in the state.

God does not leave His workers alone when they

are doing divine tasks. West knew this as a principle. In further token of this principle several unimpeachable facts came early upon the scene of the campaign. One of these factors was the immediate reaction and response of the overwhelming majority of the other pastors of the state. This within itself, at once, offset any interference of the state secretaries who really at heart were not in sympathy with the movement. When it became known that the pastors were supporting West in his "Veteran's Reward Movement," the state headquarters silenced their guns. It cannot be said that the Mission and Educational Secretaries were really against this new enterprise, but they feared the result on the receipts to the departments that they represented. Any money diverted from their work was looked upon with foreboding. Already these boards were in bad shape. Forced upon them was the realization that there was a waning interest upon the part of the denomination. The Christian public felt that it had been double-crossed in the Educational Institutions and failing to discriminate in their thinking, the church members were willing to place everything in one bundle and let them all be thrown overboard. The only possible exception to this lethargy was Foreign Missions, from which great enterprise they receded more reluctantly. Now that this new and challenging movement had

come into the field, it could not be forecast just what the effect would be. The pastors hailed with delight something which had in it a brighter sunset for them. Even the members of the churches in the state were glad to see a new day for the over-burdened, poorly paid, needy and worn out pastors. The movement was on and the tide was putting out to sea. Dr. West had made several great speeches in the state and the Associated Press, recognizing the justice of his call, had sent his appeal to the reading public. His growing popularity abroad was increasing his power back home. The pastor had been in the field only one month when his own church set aside one Sunday morning, without preaching or special music, in which to pray for the pastor and his work. Thank God, the door is closed in Bush's face.

Another contributing factor to the leadership of God in this great movement was that more than one hundred old preachers were being heard from. One of them sent a telegram simply saying, "Luke 2:29-30." Dr. West opened his Bible and read, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Only a message direct from the sky could have produced a greater thrill to the pastor. In fact, this was a message from the sky. Although in the prime of life, Dr. West could look forward to the day when

his work would be done, even though he was not to share in the reward which he was preparing for others. Before entering upon the campaign he had announced that he would not accept one single favor from the fund he was to raise.

The most signal re-enforcement of this six months' movement that was now sweeping the state came as a surprise. After Dr. West had spoken to a great audience on Sunday night in the First Church of Sharpsboro, he went to his hotel room and was thinking over the work of that busy Sunday. He had preached at two different places and the subscriptions amounted to nearly fifty thousand dollars. He was wondering if the goal would be reached before the Convention met. Only about three and one-half months remained and not much over one-half of the five hundred thousand dollars had been pledged. He was about to kneel in prayer and retire for the night. He felt the strain on his physical strength. Would he be able to go through the next ninety days? His calendar showed him that he was to speak every night the following week and then on and on. A knock at his door. He answered the call. There stood a handsome and attractive young man of about thirty years. He asked the pastor if he might talk to him for a few minutes. Dr. West welcomed him into the room. The young man introduced himself as Lee

Palmer. "I heard you at the church this evening," said Mr. Palmer. "I went home but something forced me to come to you. I could not help it. I heard what you said about the condition of those one hundred retired Veterans of the Cross. I want to bring to you this subject from another viewpoint. I once entered the ministry. I even attended the Theological Seminary for one session. The road that led into the ministry was alluring and I was happy over it. As that same road opened out into the highway of active service it seemed even more attractive. Then I began to look ahead and it was perfectly clear to me what was the end of the road. I saw poverty and loneliness and want. The hauntings of that scene, to me, were unfading ghosts. The end outweighed the beginning, so I determined that my ministry, in that form, was over. I knew that the Standard Oil Company took care of its wornout servants; that great Railroad Corporations permitted their superannuated employess to eat bread purchased by the wealth they had helped to create; and that even school teachers do not have to go to their graves as mendicants. Yet the minister has his little day and then the inevitable cloud gathers. All of this turned me from the ministry into another vocation. I made my contribution in your appeal tonight and here is my check. Before I close my story I want to say that

I know other young men who have done as I have done, hence, I hail your plan and see in it the one thing that will supply the Church of God with ministerial recruits." Young Lee Palmer rose and extended his hand and said, "Good-night, Dr. West, I am praying for you with more fervor than I have prayed since I left the ministry."

After this young man had left the room, Dr. West felt that God had sent him a new inspiration in this hour of crushing responsibility. He now had a new emphasis for his task. Both the beginning and the ending of the preacher's life had cried out to the denomination of his state. The very existence of the church was in jeopardy unless the declining years of the minister could be provided for. Again Dr. West prepared to retire, but another rap at the door. This time it was a reporter for the morning paper, asking for an interview. Dr. West was delighted for a chance to give his message to the state. He told the reporter that he had a brilliant story, provided it would be given to the Associated Press as well as to the local paper. Finally the reporter agreed to give it to the office of the Associated Press and request the manager to send it to the other papers. Then Dr. West gave the story of young Lee Palmer. When that interview was read by the people of the state next day, they were at first stunned, but, when

the reaction came, it had the effect of a revival of religion. This interview won the day. All that West had to do now was to get to the various churches and receive their pledges. The work was done.

Soon the days of the campaign were over and the first five hundred thousand dollars for the "Veteran's Reward" was raised.

The Convention met at the appointed time with the First Church of Tarrytown. It was one of those meetings in which a calm confidence and conscious victory was in the air. The attendance was up to the standard. Everybody was happy, or seemed to be. The usual great business was transacted from day to day. But they were only concerned about the report of Dr. West on his campaign for the commission on the "Veteran's Reward." When the hour arrived for his report, every messenger was present, but somebody else was present. Twenty-five old preachers had come to this Convention at the invitation of Dr. West, his church paying all of their expenses. At the hour of his report he had all of these old preachers seated on the platform behind him. This picture melted the Convention and sobs were heard all over the house. Gray, feeble, and refined old soldiers presented a picture that would challenge the admiration of the "Worthies" in the

sky. They were soon to join the great cloud of witnesses. Dr. West rose to make his report. "My brethren and fathers," said West, "my report is to be brief. But before I come to the actual report, I have a preliminary word. First of all, I say to you that I honestly believe we have struck the heart of all denominational work in this enterprise. God's called and anointed prophet is the key to the kingdom work. The 'Veteran's Reward' will encourage the minister to yield to the call of God. It will keep him to an undivided endeavor while he performs the exacting duties of pastor or missionary. Doing as we have in the past, we cannot blame the minister for turning aside in thought or act to such secular work as will give him a living on the 'rainy day.' Our ministers cannot give themselves with complete abandon to their work unless they know whence cometh their bread when the churches no longer care for them. Even if the ravens should feed them, I know that the bread of heaven will never be furnished to my soul if I neglect them. I declare the greatest handicap to the progress of the church today is the neglect of the men who, under God, make the church. One other thing this Convention must know is that the Christian people are responsive to the appeal of the old preacher. They have just been waiting for a chance. The success of this year can only be explained on the

ground that God and the wishes of the Christian people have met. Next year's victory is assured. These veterans on the platform and their more feeble partners out yonder in the state are the wards of heaven and earth. Their work is not yet done. They might live without us, but we cannot live without them. We ask them to take our hearts back to their sainted wives and tell them that if we ever get to heaven it is because you and they have led the way."

As Dr. West closed his talk somebody raised the familiar old hymn:

Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follow'r of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause
Or blush to speak His name?

Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize
And sailed through bloody seas?

Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?

Sure I must fight, if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy word.

People shouted and prayed and the Convention became a "Whitefield Camp Meeting." When the singing and shouting was over Dr. West put his official report in one sentence:

"This year we have raised for 'Veteran's Reward' five hundred and five thousand dollars, and the rest of the one million will be in hand by the time this Convention meets again."

CHAPTER XVIII

In a New World With Familiar Characters

THE pastor of the First Church of Tarrytown was one of those men whose duties were so many and exacting that he had never had an opportunity to travel. He went only to such places and at such times as he could serve. His dream of several years had been a trip to the frontier to visit the pastor-missionaries in the far west. Several of his classmates in the Seminary had gone to the western borders to engage in pioneer work. Of course, West had received letters from them occasionally, through the years. The very hardships through which the missionaries and their families had to pass attracted West the more. Several times he had set the date for his trip, but each time he had been hindered. Now that the first stage of his great duty had been passed and an organization perfected for completing the campaign, he felt that he could make his plans for the trip, so long delayed. The last of March of the following year was the time that it seemed possible for him to go. The holidays were near at hand and the details incident to the New

Year's work in his church would be over and by the middle of March he could start. He looked forward to the trip like a boy who is about to go on an excursion. As Mrs. West was to go with him, they had to arrange with some reliable person to take care of their two children, Ruth and Alex. Mrs. Vandyke agreed to board them and act as mother. She was a woman of limited means but possessed culture and goodness. The children were fond of her and often spent an afternoon with her. Mrs. West would not agree to go with her husband unless Mrs. Vandyke would keep her children. Finally the agreement was reached and all was well.

It did not take March long to arrive. The church had wonderfully prospered during the fall and winter. The assistant agreed to do his best and the congregation was glad for their pastor to have the six weeks for rest. On the 25th day of March the "Old Dominion Limited," composed of all Pullmans, moved out of the Tarrytown station with the Pastor and Mrs. West on board. Their routing carried them through many of the big cities of the country where were located big churches in which good ministers preached and labored; but the eye of West was out yonder in the big, open prairies, where growing towns dotted a treeless world. Out there were six or eight of his friends and brethren helping to settle,

civilize and Christianize new developments. He wanted to see the little churches, the small heroic congregations and the adobe manses. He knew the sacrifices were great and challenging, hence, he wanted to enter that atmosphere and there see the comrades of his school days.

When a stranger first goes into these new countries, and sees what are the limitations of the frontiersman, his heart is saddened. It takes a little while for the new-comer to discover some hidden advantages offered by this large, lonely land. When all is really understood, the law of compensation makes things quite equal. In fact, the people who live out in the sparsely settled West may seem to be lacking in many particulars, but when you really know them they are found wanting in none of those golden qualities of manhood and womanhood that make a great people. The first place at which Dr. and Mrs. West were to stop was at Alta Prairie, Arizona. This was a new railroad town of about fifteen hundred people, made up of different races and conditions. The story of this entire trip will be told by Dr. West himself in a series of articles written to the Tarrytown morning paper:

"Alta Prairie, Arizona.

"The Tarrytown Herald,

"Tarrytown.

"In keeping with my arrangement with you I am sending this first article to be published in your worthy columns. Let it be understood that it is not my purpose in these articles to give any special account of this western country as it relates to the various physical and material facts. These are well known, and whatever I could say about them would be out of date. The object of my visit is to go into the preacher's home and present a first-hand picture of the Manse Dwellers in this far-away section. Others who have written of this country did not have access to the things that I propose to learn and present to the public.

"We arrived at Alta Prairie, Arizona, in the morning of the last day of March. Rev. Joe Bruce, his wife and two boys, met us at the train. I had not seen Joe since I taught him when I occupied a chair in our State College many years ago. Though he was a pupil of mine, he is about my age and was married when I taught him. On several occasions I met his wife during those school days. For twelve years Joe has been out in Arizona, though the first years of his ministry were back in the eastern states. There are three children, the oldest a girl of sixteen, and

the two younger children are boys. They are all bright, wide-awake, and evidently partake of the laughing good nature of this western country. The years have told on Joe Bruce and his wife. Their toils have not been easy—this was evident at a glance. When they met us at the station, they welcomed us with a happiness that was genuine. Brother Bruce told us that we would walk over to the manse and that the boys would carry our suitcases in a little wagon to which were hitched their two fine dogs. We walked along talking and happy, thinking the boys would be along soon. Several hours went by and no boys. A sudden heavy rain came up and this made us feel uneasy about the boys and suitcases. When they finally came the suitcases were wet, and immediately Mrs. West feared our clothes were ruined. On investigation it was discovered that as the boys were coming home, near one of the outlying streets a jack rabbit jumped up, and they released the dogs from the wagon and went on a chase, determined to bring the rabbit in to show their newly arrived guests. Of course, they forgot all about the suitcases, while they were chasing the rabbit. Mrs. West had never seen anything like this big game, and in a measure she was comforted in the soaking her new clothes had received.

The manse was built of adobe blocks, with

several nice rooms and a big fireplace. It was warm in winter and reasonably cool in summer. The kitchen was a shed-room off the dining-room. The next morning the daughter was to prepare the breakfast, aided by the boys, and Mrs. Bruce to put on the final touches. All were seated at the breakfast table, talking and chatting gayly. Soon the pan-cakes were passed and they looked so brown and inviting, Mrs. West remarked on their attractiveness and helped herself, and so did I. We began eating them about the same time. Imagine my embarrassment when I found that I could not chew mine. They seemed to be rubber in my mouth. I glanced at Mrs. West and I saw that she was in distress. When we were about to surrender, the younger boy, standing near the table, shouted, 'April Fool!' It was the first day of April and they had put cotton in the cakes. The joke was fully enjoyed and we laughed to our heart's content. Then the real breakfast was served, to which we did full justice.

"During the day Bruce and I talked over many things that concerned him and me. The hardships of his work as well as the joyous results formed the contrasting colors of the picture. The education of his children, the shielding of his dear wife, who was breaking under the strain, and the approaching poverty of old age. These and other things we talked

over as brethren. The sharpest thorn that pierced Bruce's heart was the strange and unwarranted opposition of one or two members of his own church. To convert the Mexican, to evangelize the outsider, was no task at all compared to keeping the fellowship with one or two men, whose support he had a right to expect. All of this took me back to my own church. He was telling me nothing new. I was both grieved and comforted by his story. One manse may be built of white stone, another of brick, another of wood, and another of adobe blocks, but on the inside there are the same joys and burdens to those who dwell therein. I found Bruce greatly interested in our 'Veteran's Reward,' about which he had read in our church papers, and which he hoped would be undertaken in his state, or, better still, in all the nation. I assured him that after it was finished in my state no doubt it would be taken up as a National Movement.

"After the evening meal we sat in the little living room and talked in lighter vein. Mrs. Bruce and Mrs. West were congenial and, though living miles apart, they found much in common. When the time of the evening prayer came, we had another illustration of the free spirit of the American boy. Dr. Bruce read the scripture and as we knelt in prayer he asked me to lead. While I was praying I heard some

disturbance in the room. When the prayer was over we found that the two Bruce boys had taken advantage of their father's closed eyes and had engaged in a real fight. During the day they had had a misunderstanding and they proposed to settle it, and this was their chance. After the prayer, their father had an interview with them out in the yard. I never did know what happened, but I did notice that next morning at the breakfast table the boys were good friends, and, whether the fight or the interview in the yard produced the armistice was never a bit of my business.

"Next day was Sunday, and Bruce said I must preach. I did not want to do it. I was on a rest tour. But how could I refuse him? The congregation gathered and the little church was full of splendid looking people. They were so free and democratic that it refreshed my soul. They sang the hymns with joy and in a worshipful spirit. I did not speak long but I tried to bring them a spiritual message. When the service was over we were received with a warmth that only these noble Christians of the West can give. That afternoon I asked Bruce if he had seen two men in conversation just outside the church door during the first part of the service. He told me that he had. I thought I knew what it was all about, but I wanted to see if he knew. He told me that it

was almost a regular thing with them. They were the men who were trying to impede his church work, and they took advantage of this time when the pastor was burdened and occupied with his morning service to discuss the pastor, his methods, and the church in general. At the same time they bore but little part of the church load. While Pastor Bruce was telling me this, the picture of those two boys fighting during prayer came to my mind. They were but children and their act was incident to youth and life. They received their reprimand, which all will admit was deserved. But here we have two mature men engaging in an act far more serious than the boyish fight. They would disrupt and ruin. The only similarity was in the fact that both groups used an unfortunate hour. The conduct of these men was far more reprehensible, and yet no reprimand was ever administered. No word of rebuke was ever spoken. Such conduct as this is treason, but it goes on in nearly all of the churches. But some day there will be a reckoning.

"Monday morning found Mrs. West and myself on our way to Sylva, New Mexico, a little town near Roswell. My next will be written from there.

"Cordially,

"WEST."

CHAPTER XIX

In a New World With Familiar Characters (Continued)

"Sylva, New Mexico.

"The Tarrytown Herald,
"Tarrytown.

"We have been here at Sylva for several days. The country is charming, but I am not to write about that. I am still trying to center the attention of my friends upon the object of this trip: a close-up view of the 'Manse Dwellers.' The Rev. Blair Crow is the pastor of our church at this place. He met us at the train and took us immediately to the manse. Here we found Mrs. Crow sick in bed. We begged to be allowed to go on as it seemed an imposition to stay in a home where there was illness, but neither of them would agree, saying that our visit would be of double value at such a time. We further learned that Mrs. Crow was a semi-invalid and that they had learned how to adjust themselves to these conditions. There were four children in the family and they were helpful in the household duties. The two oldest were boys nearly grown and the two girls were fine housekeepers. Very soon we found ourselves at ease

and comfortably put away in a little guest chamber. Despite the sick wife, cheerfulness and good nature were the characteristics of the entire household. Mrs. West wanted to help do the work but they would have none of it. Mrs. Crow told her that she had been looking forward to her coming, and that she wanted to do a year's talking in four days. The lady of the house proved to be one of those philosophical, well-read and cheerful spirits whom you read about. Many of the best magazines of the country come to this manse, and as she was able to do very little else, she kept up with the movements of the world. The entire family was devoted to those lonely plains and all that went with them. Her husband offered to give up his work and bring her back East where she possibly could have more comforts, but she said she did not want to return as she would rather live five years out there than ten in any other state.

"Pastor Crow had done a thing in his church work that was revolutionary. He had worried along with the State Mission Board, trying to get help for buildings and further supplementary appropriations to his salary until it seemed hopeless to go any further. Every time he would apply for additional aid the Board would inform him that nothing could be done as the General Secretary's salary had to be raised, or two new clerical men had to be added to the force,

or two or three of the men forced out of the defunct Inter-Church World Movement had to be taken care of. Then it became known that the general membership of the denomination was burdened with the calls coming from the general building program of the Young Men's Christian Association in which large lobbies and expensive living rooms must be provided for the best salaried young men of the cities. These and other causes of delay on the part of the State Board put George Crow to thinking. He decided to get his church to come off of the Board and throw itself upon the heart of the membership and the community. This was done and from that hour a new day began to dawn for the Sylva Church. Crow is now convinced that this is the plan to be adopted by at least ninety per cent of these so-called Mission Churches. To go on any longer as they have been going means humiliation to the pastors and pauperization to the churches. Crow says that there are only two great big outside enterprises now for the church—'Foreign Missions' and 'Veteran's Reward.' He seems better posted about these movements and needs than I am, although I have just finished a successful campaign for five hundred thousand dollars as a starter for 'Veteran's Reward.' I can say truthfully that Crow's church

has the air of independence, self-respect, satisfaction, and victory.

"There was a unanimous request, almost a command, that I hold one week-day service in Roswell for the preachers of the town and surrounding country. Again I yielded, though my wife often reminded me that I was out for a rest. But the time was set and all the ministers, especially, were invited, and others who cared to come would be welcome. The house was nearly full and I was made happy by the evident good will of the gathering. My sermon began at ten-thirty o'clock in the morning and I preached forty-five minutes and turned the service into the hands of the pastor. An absolutely new experience was to be mine and it was not long in coming. One brother arose and said, 'Brethren, I am disappointed this morning. I have not heard what I wanted to hear.' At once I ran my mind back over my sermon. I had done my best, and to have a brother say he was disappointed was a new experience for me. Then the pastor asked the brother to explain himself. I was much relieved when the disappointed brother said, 'I do not mean to reflect upon the sermon, but what I want to hear and expected to hear is something about the 'Veteran's Reward Campaign' through which Dr. West has led his state, and something of which we have read in the

papers. We people out in this country are in no hurry; we stay at church till we get through; I move that Dr. West take the pulpit once more and preach to us again on that "campaign." ' Forty people seconded the motion and I received my first encore. There was nothing else to do, so I went back into the pulpit and told the story of my recent campaign, so familiar to your readers and my people back home. The occurrence was so unusual and the interest so real in the hearts of preachers and laymen that the Associated Press carried my story in the Western papers and especially those of Texas. Within two days after this unexpected outburst a rich business man of Texarkana announced his intention of giving one million dollars to a fund for the care of worn-out preachers, provided it would be national and that the churches would raise nine millions; thus, the movement, he said, would go on to twenty million and finally to fifty million. The echo from my Roswell experience is sounding in my ears yet. Soon we left Sylva and made a stop of a day or two at about six other places. We found thrills, joys, disappointments, and heartaches, in every manse that we visited.

"Before I close this article I want to give my impressions of the services rendered by these Manse Dwellers. When the great crowning takes place,

these men are going in before all the other men I have known. They are going to have the first consideration. But there is a class of people that will be provided for even ahead of these preachers, and that class is composed of these preachers' wives. Their devotion to their children, their husbands and to their God was only excelled at Calvary.

"But back to these preachers. They are the makers of civilization and the winners of a continent. They belong to that royal group that produced a Marcus Whitman and Jason Lee, who saved the West politically; for the men I am visiting are saving it socially and religiously. Human society is the determining factor in realty values. Wealth cannot be outside of good society, therefore they are martyrs to wealth in which they are not allowed to share. Of these this world is not worthy. I have found the men and women whose thoughts are in heaven and they are leading the way.

"Cordially,
"WEST."

CHAPTER XX

In a New World With Familiar Characters (Concluded)

"Casca Grande, Texas.

"Tarrytown Herald,

"Tarrytown.

"Lest you and my friends grow weary of my Manse pictures of the West I promise you that this is the last one. From Sylva, we came to this little city located near the Rio Grande River and a few miles from the border. From this place we start back home and will make only two brief stops: one at Kansas City and the other in Chicago. We want to see two of the largest churches in all the country and get a first-hand view of the problems of the pastors in the large churches. Some other day I will write about what I shall be permitted to see there.

"But back to Casca Grande. To visit this place and see the Manse Dwellers here was the primal motive of this trip. Rev. Geo. Strong, the pastor at this place, was my desk-mate and comrade during the three years I was in the Seminary; he and I were like brothers. Like myself he was a married student and our wives also were good friends.

"We struggled with poverty as well as with the heavy courses of the school; we told each other of our ambitions and desires. As a student, Strong was my superior, and as a preacher he was a success even in those days. I fully expected him to take rank ahead of me and he has. His influence for the gospel permeates this entire border. Back in the Seminary days, he always insisted that his work was out in the pioneer world. I was often vexed at him for not setting his heart on some large city pastorate. Even since we have been out in the world, I have thought of him many times and pitied him. His letters to me, through the years, have given me added sympathy for him. Since coming here my entire attitude has changed. He is really a crowned man.

"When we knew the Strongs in school, they often challenged our admiration. He was tall and handsome, and Mrs. Strong was a queen in appearance and grace. They were people of culture and refinement; they were born of noble and aristocratic families. We never could quite understand why they were moved to turn their faces to missionary fields. We think we understand it better now. Do not misunderstand me. George Strong has his problems, hard hours, and defeats. The heart-throbs and joys of my manse have passed through his. Before leaving the Seminary, a son was born to Mr. and Mrs.

Strong, and, since coming here, another son was born. For awhile after coming out here, Brother Strong did strictly missionary work, going from place to place, leaving his wife and two children alone. The fear and danger incident to such a plan was a strain on Mrs. Strong and soon this fine, cultured woman fell ill and for two years she was not able to take care of her family or even herself. This was not only trying to her, but it rendered his service all but useless. Just what to do he did not know. About this time he was invited to come back East and take charge of a church in a good city with four times the salary he was getting. He and Mrs. Strong talked the matter over and finally decided that God needed them out here more than He did back home. This decision was reached while Mrs. Strong was still on her sick bed, needing wholesome food, medicine, and tender nursing. Not once did she complain or express dissatisfaction with her lot. You ask why should people of such high attainment and culture go into these out-of-the-way places and sacrifice their talents? You do not understand. Some of the best, strongest, and brightest people of American civilization are out here. Such people as the Strongs are needed here. To be sure these missionaries of the cross are paying a dear price in giving their lives, but no other kind are equal to the call.

"What a life these two young boys are living! The health of the mother is improved now, and Dr. Strong is pastor of a growing church, in an important but small town. They enter into the life and activities of these two boys. One day I was out in an open field with the boys where they were playing with their goats. The sport was fine, the boys and goats seemed to be enjoying equally the fun. The strong spring wind blew my hat off and I was running to catch it, stooping occasionally to pick it up, when one of the big goats thought I had entered the game and rushed up behind me and gave me such a blow that he butted me ten feet ahead of my hat, though the hat was travelling twenty miles an hour. I did not know what had happened to me. If I had time to think at all, I thought a Texas cyclone had struck. The only difference in my diversion for the next few days was that I was constantly looking for the softest seat in the manse.

"For one whole day I had to talk to Strong about the 'Veteran's Reward,' in which that dear fellow is so deeply interested. While Mr. and Mrs. Strong are about our age, their hardship is telling on them, which in appearance places them far beyond our years. Soon the wife will be a confirmed invalid. Strong is struggling to pay back some school debts, and all this made one's heart go out to them, as the

sunset for them is sure to come prematurely. Only on Sunday did the whole situation of these Western Manse Dwellers dawn upon us. This is our last day here before we start on our return trip. Before I close this article I must tell you about the Sunday we spent here. I did not want to preach, I have been trying to rest. But what could I do? Here was my best friend of Seminary days, here his dear wife, and his noble, struggling church, and all together the appeal was too much for me. But as it all turned out, the preaching on that day proved my easiest task, in fact that was what saved me. Another thing happened that same day that crowned the trip with pathos and love.

"Saturday night we all managed to get our baths and retire early, for we agreed to go to Sunday School. Mrs. Strong said she was going too, though her body was never entirely free from pain. We were all to meet at the breakfast table at eight o'clock. Of course, everybody had on his or her best Sunday clothes. The Strongs wanted to honor us and the occasion by wearing the best they had. We gathered in the dining-room at the appointed hour. Mr. and Mrs. Strong, the two boys, Mrs. West and myself made the party at the board. I noticed that the clothes that Strong wore seemed familiar, even to his tie. My wife also passed into a silence that I knew

always came upon her when her heart was heavy. But our hosts seemed unusually jolly and we made an effort to enter into the brightness of the naturally cloudless Sunday morning. When breakfast was over, Mrs. West and I went into our room for final preparations for Sunday School. As we closed the door behind us my wife could bear up no longer; she burst into tears. She recognized the dress that Mrs. Strong was wearing as one that she gave to the Missionary Society in Tarrytown to be put into the missionary box to be sent somewhere. She never expected to see it again, and here is her friend and equal wearing it. Dr. Strong also wore the ministerial suit contributed by me for the same missionary box. The saddest phase of it was that the Strongs were so innocent of it all and seemed proud that they were so well dressed. Suppose they knew that they were receiving us in our own discarded clothing? My wife regained her poise and I think would have gotten along fine, but, when we started out the manse door, she discovered that Mrs. Strong had donned the very hat that she had given to the missionary box. If Mrs. West and I ever needed God's grace it was that morning as we walked to the little white church around the corner.

"But God did help us and I preached to a good audience of appreciative people. The rest of the

Sunday was spent in the happiest mood that we could summon, but we were glad when Monday morning came and all put on their every-day clothes. This is Tuesday and we entrain for dear old Tarrytown.

"Cordially,

"WEST."

CHAPTER XXI

Scenes for Blind Men

DR. and Mrs. West are back in their own manse after a visit which gave them an opportunity to gather first-hand information, and to come into heart contact with churches and preachers in a very wonderful way. On this trip to the Western border, they had seen everything from the little church and the small congregation up to the largest city congregation in the entire country. This, coupled with the fact that he had been in vital and working contact with all the churches of his own state, gave Dr. West an authority on some of the practical sides of church life. The church and citizens of Tarrytown welcomed the pastor home. He was one of those useful citizens who are missed not only from his own church, but from the community, when away.

Hence, on Sunday morning a great audience greeted Dr. West at the church hour. His articles in the Tarrytown Herald added new interest to his home-coming. The theme announced for the morn-

ing was, "Scenes for Blind Men." In this chapter we shall give part of what he said.

"My Friends and Brethren: It is a true joy to be back with you this morning. I have not been on a long and classical trip to the Holy Land, nor to the historic places of the world, as some pastors have been privileged to do. Mine has been a little near-up visit to those places that help to make up the fields and tasks of our denominational work at home. In a certain sense I do feel that I have been to the 'Holy Land.' It is not so much of a review of what I saw and felt on these hard, flinty fields, that I want to talk about; that, I have given you in a series of articles. My purpose this morning is to bring to you some scenes which have pressed themselves upon me, in the last few years, coming from every angle. They are so plain that it seems to me that blind men can see them. I know that a physically blind man cannot see the real pictures, mountains, stars or even the sky. But there are some scenes in the church life today that even blind men can see.

"Scene First: There is a lack of interest, a broken morale and a depleted treasury. Not to try to explain the causes, but to tell you the fact, is my aim. Not a mission board, nor a school with which I have come in contact for the past two years but is in financial jeopardy. To add to the pathos of

this situation, nobody seems to care. Time was when we cried over denominational debts. Where are those tears now? If our Missionary Secretaries and school men could see as well as blind men, they would understand that a new sentiment must be born or all of our enterprises are on the rocks. I leave it for another to give the causes; I give the facts. I need not give you the figures, for they are written on the bookkeeper's sheets in every mission and school office, with the rarest exception.

"Scene Two: That Jesus has been betrayed in the house of some of His friends. There are some preachers in our own denomination, in this land, who take away the God-nature from Christ and still worse they claim to be His friend. There are a few teachers, in our own denominational schools, founded by money given by our fathers, sealing the graves of those same sleeping sires, in that they say the seal of Christ's tomb remains unbroken. If we are so blind that we cannot see this, then it is because we refuse to see.

"Scene Three: That the Sunday Schools pushed by certain experts are smothering and at the same time starving the preaching services of the churches. In my rounds, I have noticed that a service called Sunday School, occupying an hour and a quarter on Sunday morning, seems to be sufficient for the con-

sciences and minds of many pupils and teachers. It may or may not have been a kind of a half jovial service, but anyhow it is enough. Of course, the Sunday School is a fine thing, but it is rapidly becoming a joke; I mean that it has played a joke on the church. Shades of the great preaching services of two generations ago! Note the situation of many of the organized classes of the Sunday School. They use the fine room of the educational building, which the church had to finance, they warm themselves by the fires, burnt from the coal that the church put in the furnace room, and they run their business in a place for which they pay no rents. Then when these classes take up their offering they use a part or all of that money to further some pet scheme of their own. These classes hardly let the Sunday School have enough of their collection to pay for the literature which they use. What is worse, the organized classes sometimes grow selfish, non-co-operative, dictatorial, and bigoted. They forget that they are created to foster the Sunday School in a helpful way. These classes are made up, for the most part, of mature men and women who should be the big brothers and sisters to the others of the Bible School. Let the Sunday School remember that the church and its work is not only the Bible plan for preaching the

gospel but that it is the burden-bearer for the Sunday School, just as the parent is the burden-bearer for the child.

"Scene Four: A tendency for Boards and secretaries to suggest programs and policies to pastors and churches, and if the pastors and churches decline the suggestions, they must suffer the consequences. It is for the Convention to suggest the budgets and to advertise to the world how much of it the church really meets. The pastor, in a sense, is held responsible for the failure to meet the required amount. It is perfectly easy to see that the pastor, who is the best servant to the Secretaries' and Boards' program, is the one who is pushed forward into places of publicity and honor.

"Scene Five: That missionary societies are doing, in most cases, everything but mission work. It is also easy to see that it would be a matter of laughter, if it were not so serious, that there is a missionary society, as a sub-organization in a missionary church. Why not the entire church enter the program of giving the whole gospel to the whole world? This will never be as long as there is a group to whom the church can point and say, 'There is our Missionary Department.' All of us have noticed that a missionary society will meet in a nice warm church room and spend the day in singing and praying and eating.

But it is that almost lone individual of the society who will go and do some personal evangelism in the local community. It is fine to look across the sea to that picture of so-called heathenism when 'distance lends enchantment,' but to lead some soul in your own block to Christ and church membership is done only by those rare human beings who would do this kind of thing even though no missionary society ever existed.

"Scene Six: It is perfectly clear that a fair thinking world does not consider a critical, atheistic and unregenerated literary genius, however brilliant and daring, to be qualified or equipped to discuss the affairs of parish or preacher. The colossal presumption of the ages is when a man, unknown to Grace or God, plunges into the sacred realm of religion and with a contemptible egotism strides through a world that he knows nothing about. The preacher, being human, has his faults, but even then he is far above the villainous satires, recently made upon him, as the great central sun is above the glow worm, or as Heaven is above Hell. The infidel has to cross too wide a fixed gulf to have sufficient strength left to do the preacher much harm when he reaches that realm where God's servant dwells and performs his labors of love, bathed in a spiritual atmosphere of which the carnal infidel is not informed.

"Scene Seven: That the pastor is made the unfortunate victim of every church misunderstanding or quarrel. The disturbance may originate in business between two men, but it will spread until its black wings will hover over the head of the pastor. The trouble may come from some social jealousies between two members of the church, but it never stops until it reaches him. He seems to be the one whom all can blame for anything that arises. But someone will say, 'Why didn't the pastor stay out of it?' He cannot. It is not that he wishes to be in; they put him in and he must pay the penalty. This is one thing I have never tried to explain to myself. I can reach no satisfactory answer. Maybe it is because he is the paid man of the church. Maybe it is because the devil is directing the darts, but, whatever is the cause, these are the cruel facts.

"Scene Eight: Beyond question, the great heart of the general church membership is loyal, true, and trustworthy. No danger in the majorities. The minority is the source of nearly all church trouble. The pastors who have confided in and taken their cause direct to the people are the ones who win and succeed. The minorities must be controlled, and this can be done only by taking the majorities into confidence and walking with them, having God for the leader.

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"Scene Nine: This last scene is the one to which I have been coming. This scene is written on the sky and all can see it if they will only look; that there is coming a changing order of things. God's work is going on to victory, but the change is already arriving. The old-time calls do not have equal appeals. There are three great calls growing louder with the years, but some others can hardly be heard. We have linked our work in the 'United Program,' but they will not unite. Some of them have proven to be 'sinkers' and pulled the others under.

"One of the great appeals is that of Foreign Missions. This has not lost its power, except for the fact that it has been bunched with weaker causes. The Christian world, today, really wants to send the gospel to the religiously benighted. Strip Foreign Missions from the things that have handicapped it and your coffers will be full again. Another great readjustment is that the Junior Denominational College is going to come into its own. The state gives the elementary education and also gives the higher college work. It takes big money for this higher college and university work, and the state can provide it. The hour you provide the Denominational University with the amount of money required to do this finishing work, that college, only too often, betrays its trust and no longer helps the churches

which gave it life. The Junior Denominational College takes the boy and girl from high school and, in the first two years, gives them the foundation and fundamentals of Christianity. Then the state can do as much for them as the big Denominational College can do and with no more danger to be feared from the State University than from the Denominational College. The Junior College is a small school that depends upon the church and breathes the life of the church. Tomorrow is going to travail and bring forth the Junior College.

"The other great appeal to laymen and preachers alike, is the 'Veteran's Reward.' Here I have a right to speak—and can do so fresh from the field. In this state of ours, I found that the people were awaiting the movement to start, and, once started, thousands of dollars came quick and fast. No longer will the people be willing to turn their old preachers out to starve. Christianity has produced too fine a sense of justice to allow this to go further.

"The hour has arrived and the clock has struck. All this great movement needs is a brave champion. This glorious movement is in the air. You cannot stop it. In summing up these scenes and giving you this new order, I have had no ugly feelings in my heart. I have but been a voice speaking to you what

God has been working out. If all this be His will, it is not mine to deny Him."

After Dr. West had finished his survey of the scenes, he spoke a few words of gospel appeal and opened the doors of his church. Many came forward and united. It was his first day in his own church for six weeks; it was also the first day in the new order.

CHAPTER XXII

School Days

(Four Years Later)

NO picture of the manse is complete without drawing the school days. Perhaps we should say "College Days," but there is a sentiment and romance about the expression "School Days."

It was one of those lazy, lifeless days, the first week in June, and most people were taking the day easily, even to the point of indolence. This was not the case, however, over at the manse. Dr. West, Mrs. West, and Ruth, were all aglow, and the day, to them, was one of those epochal days the world knows nothing about, because the thrills belong to that little circle of homes where love of one's own, blossoms into the fairest flower that blooms. The "Old Dominion Limited," the finest train that passes through Tarrytown, arrives from the north at five o'clock. That old train had been coming down every day for many years, but on this special June day this train is the central event for the Manse Dwellers. Thirty minutes before the time of the arrival of the

Limited, Dr. and Mrs. West, accompanied by Ruth, were at the station to meet Alex, who was just returning for his first vacation, after completing successfully his freshman year at Princeton. It had been a long year for the dear ones back home. Because of the expense involved, Alex had not been home since he left last fall. When the train stopped, Alex swung off and rushed to the arms of mother, then he kissed his father, but Ruth could scarcely wait her turn. As these two fine children wrapped their arms about each other the father and mother could not restrain their tears. Their hearts were fairly bursting with admiration and love. Alex was a handsome, tall athlete, and stood erect, except when he walked there was just a little suggestion of awkwardness. He was a young man whose presence would be marked in any company. Ruth was now a young lady of seventeen, possessing grace, innocence, and trustful childishness. She was evidently proud of her fine brother. To be sure she had graduated from the high school just three days before her brother's return, but she was conscious that he had been to college, at least one year, and to that extent he was her hero. Ruth wore a beautiful bunch of flowers which had been selected from the bouquet Alex had sent her for her graduation day. She had carefully preserved a few of them to wear

when she met that beloved brother at the train. Soon they were all in the manse ready for a reunion dinner, and thus the first school vacation in this manse had begun.

All through the summer Alex would tell, from time to time, of his experiences in college, and all of his stories and events were so enchanting to Ruth that she never grew tired of them. They were all the more interesting to her because she had a faint hope that she would be able to go to college too.

Down at the church one night there was a banquet and entertainment given in honor of all the boys and girls who were at home on their vacation from school. Dr. and Mrs. West did not go, so they were left at home alone. They sat in the library reading. The silence was broken by Dr. West, who said, "Hazel, what was Ruth crying about this afternoon when I came home?" Mrs. West replied, "She did not want you to know that she was crying—how did you find it out? She and I agreed not to let you know." "But, my dear, I must know, now!" said Dr. West. "When I walked into my room this afternoon, her door was ajar and I heard her plainly as she cried and sobbed. Please tell me the cause." "Well, James," said Mrs. West, "the dear girl realizes that we are hardly able to send her to college this fall, and she does not blame you or anybody for it,

but it is breaking her heart that she cannot go. Now that Alex is home and his college life is so charming as he relates it to her, she has grown more eager to go. Of course, it hurts you and me even more than it does her. I heard Alex tell her the other day that he was going to stay home next year and work and let her go to college, and they would thus graduate the same year." "What did she say to that?" asked Dr. West. "She would not agree to that," replied Mrs. West. "She told him that if she never saw a college she would not interfere with his education, not even permit him to break his comradeship with the class with which he had started." Then again there was silence, but neither of them understood what they were reading.

An hour later Alex and Ruth came storming into the house, full of glee and supremely happy in each other's company and fellowship. For another hour that quartette of serenely happy people turned the old manse into a vestibule of Heaven. Kissing each other good-night, the pastor's little brood flew away to rest. About two o'clock in the morning, Mrs. West was awakened by a noise in her husband's private study. She called to him in a frightened voice and he, recognizing that she was alarmed, answered immediately that he was just looking for some important papers of which he had thought during the

night. As it was the pastor's custom to get up in the night and write down sermon thoughts that would come to him, she attached no special importance to the incident. In fact, had she not been unusually nervous that night, Mrs. West would not have been concerned over the noise which came from her husband's den, for after all this was nothing new. It was not until next morning that the real facts were known.

Alex and Ruth went out in the automobile to the country to get some vegetables for dinner. Deacon Bush and his sympathizers always criticised the children for using the church car, but the time had passed for trying to reconcile this unhappy deacon to anything the pastor and his family wanted to do, so they had to ignore him and do the best they could. While these young people were gone, Dr. West called Mrs. West into the den and told her that he could not sleep the night before for trying to plan a way by which he could send Ruth to college. In the middle of the night he thought of his insurance policies and he was up, looking them over to see how much cash value they carried. He showed his wife that they could borrow three thousand dollars on them and thereby, he could send both to college next session, and by strict economy, could keep them there till their graduation. "Hazel,

I took out these policies for you, and unless you consent I will not use this money for any other purpose. My decision is in your hands." The reason Mrs. West did not respond at once was because she just could not speak. "My dear, I love you for your thought of my protection after you have left me. Any wife appreciates that on the part of her husband, but if I could love you more than I do now, it would be for your willingness to do this or any other thing to send my darling daughter to college. You have my urgent consent." The mother was now content in the plans that were soon to be made. About that time Ruth and Alex drove up and their laughter was the morning's best music. The mother tried to be calm, but struggle as she would, she must break the news to Ruth. So quickly she told her that Father was going to borrow the money on his life insurance policy, and send her to college this fall. The manse had witnessed many joyous hours, but no hour ever equalled this one for unalloyed delight. Long ago the college had been selected, provided she could go. Smith College was the school on which they had all agreed. The big question was, Is it too late to secure a reservation? Quickly they decided to send a night letter. Ruth was in more suspense than she had ever been in all of her life. She had been taught to exercise and believe in prayer, so she earn-

estly prayed that there might be a place for her. Next afternoon the return message came, saying, "One room left. We reserve it for Ruth West. Registrar, Smith College."

If joy could be added to the summer, it was now added. October soon came and two trunks were packed instead of one. But it all meant a manse without either child. It was only a forecast of that longer, lonesome day which will come sometime. The two went away without knowing of the tragic experience about to come to dear old Dad.

Deacon Bush had been active gathering whatever recruits he could. It is strange that when a church member or members are offended with the pastor, no amount of success in the work, or the real blessings of God can change the opposing heart. The bitterness of the critical heart is never sweetened. The crowning favors and approval of God weighs nothing in comparison to stubborn selfishness. The fact that the two children had gone away to great American schools now put another weapon in Bush's hand. How did they get the money? He would mildly hint at the collections that West had taken on the field while campaigning the state. Several others had become offended with the work of Mrs. West in the missionary society though she only did what she had been asked to do. Bush hunted out all these sore

spots. Mrs. West could not but wonder if this newly gathered force against her husband's pastorate would not interrupt her cherished plans for her children's education. Both of them were writing back about how happy they were and how splendidly they were progressing with their work. Ruth had decided that even though she might be invited to join a Greek Letter Fraternity, she would not do so. She had reached this conclusion for two reasons. First of all, she was so democratic in her feelings that she preferred general contact and association. Then, again, she knew there were no fraternities in Princeton, and she did not want to be different from Alex.

All of the schools were looking forward to the big football game to be played at Princeton between Harvard and Princeton on Thanksgiving Day. Alex was determined that his sister Ruth should attend, and had saved enough money from his allowance to bring her to the game. When the day and hour for her arrival came, Alex invited his college chum and classmate, Roy Prince, to go with him to the train to meet Ruth. As this beautiful young woman alighted, she was looking her best. That lovely sport suit and coat were so becoming, and so in keeping with the occasion. Though Roy and Alex were about the same age, Roy seemed to be an older brother and was a great help to him.

After Ruth and Alex had fondly embraced, Roy was presented to Ruth. Soon they were on the way to Ruth's boarding house. The air was electric with enthusiasm over the approaching game, which was to be played the next day. That evening, Alex and Roy went up to Ruth's quarters and took her down to the club house on the great campus of Princeton. Many college boys and girls were there from the various colleges of the country. A finer group of young people could not be assembled. Alex was a member of the Reception Committee, hence he had many duties that evening, so he frequently had to excuse himself to attend to these calls, and thus had to leave Ruth in care of Roy. But Alex had not yet realized that it was no irksome duty for Roy to attend Ruth. "One could easily see," said a mutual friend, "that the golden auburn hair, deep blue eyes, graceful form and gracious manner of Ruth had charmed Roy and made him so happy that his interest in the game was being eclipsed."

The game was played before one of those great crowds which always come to witness the battle between these two wonderful schools. No matter about the score. The world is always more interested in the game of hearts than any other game. At the reception that night, glee and gladness were at the highest. Young people from the nation over, played, sang, and

danced to charming music. Even on that occasion, Ruth was charming and at ease. Her fine breeding naturally gave her poise and winsomeness in this, the greatest social college function that she had hitherto attended. Roy's interest in the sister of his college chum was unabated, but he knew that the ethics of the occasion demanded that he allow Ruth to divide her time with other friends. Among the boys of Princeton there were two fellows from the state of Colorado. They were cousins, named Tobe and Jake Long. Their fathers had gone West fifteen years ago and had grown rich in the ranching business. Tobe and Jake had grown up in luxury and wealthy idleness. They had been students in Princeton the previous year, but on their return to the school this season they were not permitted to enter. But, as they had always been allowed to do as they pleased, they hung around that part of the country waiting to see this great Thanksgiving game, and came to the reception that night. They were fellows of good appearance, and when they desired, could make themselves most agreeable. None were more finely dressed than they, and for some reason neither of them had taken a single drink. This was marveled at by those who knew their habits. During the course of the evening, Jake and Tobe were presented to Ruth. It is not surprising that they liked her, for who could help it?

She was the embodiment of all that makes womanhood beautiful. Tobe could not leave her. Discovering her wonderfully fair and sympathetic nature, he dared to tell her of how he and his cousin were not allowed to enter the school that year, and attempted to show that a prejudice of some kind had entered into the action. He half convinced Ruth of the injustice of the decision. Before leaving her that night he obtained her consent to allow him to visit her at Tarrytown during the coming vacation. It is hard for a girl to know the motive that, sometimes, actuates a man. In fact, Tobe could hardly analyze his own motive; he only knew that here was one of the most beautiful human beings he had ever met. He was also conscious that his experience was such that no mark was too shining for him to leave unmarred if his desire led him on. Next day Ruth was to return to Smith. A short time before the train was to depart, Roy Prince decided that somebody should attend Ruth as far as New York and see that she got on the right train in the big city. This, he thought, ought to be done, although her Pullman passed through New York without change. He announced to Alex that he was going along with Ruth for protection. So Roy went, and Ruth did not get lost, though she nearly lost her heart, for the first time in her life.

CHAPTER XXIII

More School Days

HE Thanksgiving season had become an accustomed affair with Alex and Roy, so they returned to the routine of school life undisturbed. But Ruth West went back to Smith College with strange and conflicting thoughts passing through her mind. She had had many pleasant associates among the boys in her high school years. The sentiments which passed through her heart in those days went away one after another. But, now that she was more of a woman and had to decide upon the question of choosing friends without the shelter of home and mother, a new condition was created for her. She wondered why she could not forget the impressions made by Tobe, and why she was about the only one who liked him. He had presented himself to her in such a way that she felt that possibly he had either been misunderstood, or that she was the one person that challenged him to better things. Anyhow, she liked him, but was perfectly satisfied to await further revelations. Then there was Roy Prince, who had come with her to New

York on her return to school. He was to her a noble and sincere young fellow whose actions did not need to be explained. Roy's attentions to Ruth were those of one who really cares, but whose feelings had not been expressed in words. Then he was a friend to Alex, and that within itself commended him to Ruth. Of course, she would see him again, as Alex would attend to that. On the other hand, she had already agreed to let Tobe visit her during the summer vacation. She put the Thanksgiving emotions out of her mind as best she could and entered once more upon her studies. For financial reasons it was understood that neither she nor Alex would be home during the Christmas holidays. Already she began to realize how hard this would be, for Ruth had never been away from her mother and father on that happy occasion. However, she was always considerate of her father's problems. She knew just how much money was being spent in keeping her and Alex in college. Her own suffering became her pleasure, if thereby she was helping her father. Besides, there were to be other girls remaining in the college building, and they were planning some local affairs which would help them through their lonely days.

Back at Princeton, Alex was thinking and laying plans. One night he laid aside his book and said, "Roy, I just must break into our studies long enough

to talk something off of my mind. You know father and mother have never spent a Christmas at home alone. My sister, Ruth, has never been away from home this long before in her life. Our family council reached the conclusion that if we both went to college this year we would be forced to forego returning at Christmas time. I have decided that if I never go to school another day, my sister is going home and spend the holidays with our parents. As to myself, I can bear it, but I cannot stand for Ruth to be away." There was sympathetic silence in that dormitory room for several minutes. Then Roy stood facing Alex and said, "I have no home to which I can go. I have no mother, and I do not want to go to see my father, I mean I cannot go to see him. So, Alex, you will please accept money from me, with which to buy tickets for Ruth and yourself." Alex could scarcely get his mind off of what Roy meant when he said, "I do not want to go to see my father." If he could get his mind past that, then he would reply to Roy's offer of money. But finally Alex said, "That is noble of you, old man, but of course, we could not accept it. You see, Roy, my sister and I have one advantage: we have been reared in a manse, and we know how to do without some things, which we cannot get." Alex, in order to break the evident gloom that was about to settle down, gave a hearty

laugh and said, "Forget it." Then they turned to their books.

The next morning, when the English class assembled, the teacher asked that Alex West remain for an interview after the class. Alex could not even guess the cause for such a request. When the class was over, the instructor told Alex that on the previous day, a representative of a big eastern magazine had called to present a contest plan for the best article to be written by a sophomore. The plan was to select five of the leading colleges of the country, and have a member of the sophomore class of each of the five colleges to enter the contest. The subject was to be the "Significance of Christmas," and the prize would be two hundred dollars. Dr. Phillips, the teacher, told Alex that he had selected him as the contestant from the Sophomore Class of Princeton. Brave and poised as Alex was, this was almost too much for him. To be so honored by his teacher was glory enough, and then to have a chance to earn so much money brought its peculiar thrill. If he could only win, then he would send his sister home for Christmas. This was the first thought that went through his mind. So he went back to his room, keeping the secret in his own heart, except that he wrote to Ruth. He told her to be free and ready in case he won, so she could join him. He did not tell

his father and mother, for he knew that the possible disappointment would be more keen to them than to himself or even Ruth. Long, tedious hours were spent on the essay. Alex had new reasons for being grateful that he had been reared in a manse, in which he had learned the true "Significance of Christmas." The article was finished within a week and turned over to the English teacher, Dr. Phillips, for criticism. When the instructor had read the paper, he was practically sure Alex had won, though he did not tell him his real opinion. The article was forwarded to the magazine to be passed on, along with the other four, by three disinterested judges. Within another week Alex had received a letter telling him he had won, and the publisher's check for two hundred dollars was enclosed. With suppressed emotions Alex read the letter and placed the check in his pocket. The first thing he did was to wire Ruth of his victory and to tell her to be ready to leave for home when her school closed for the holidays. He also wrote to his father and mother telling them the good news and that both of them would spend Christmas in the dear old manse. He sought out Roy and told him the happy result, and added, "Roy, I could not accept your generous offer, but now you must use that money you offered me to go home with us, and we will have such a good time, and my father

and mother will be so happy to have you." Roy was a fine, big, handsome fellow nearly six feet tall, but at this invitation and good fortune of Alex he nearly lost control of himself and would not allow Alex to see his face. Finally, he said, "Alex, I am as happy as you are over your success. I thank you for your invitation. Nothing in the world would give me so much pleasure as to go with you and Ruth." When he called the name of Ruth there was an additional note of longing in his voice. "But, Alex, I must decline, for the only place in the United States I cannot go at this time is Tarrytown, though it is also the one place I would rather go. Some day you will know why." Alex accepted the inevitable and pressed the invitation no further, but pondered in his heart this strange statement.

Both schools adjourned for the Christmas vacation. Alex waited for Ruth to come on from Smith College and he boarded her train, but did not join her alone, for Roy went with them as far as Washington, where they spent a whole day in sight-seeing, while two hearts were seeing deep into each other. When Alex and Ruth left Roy that night, he waved them good-bye as the old Limited pulled out. As soon as Alex and Ruth were alone, he told her how he had invited Roy to go home with them and what he said about his being unable to go to Tarrytown.

Ruth could throw no light on this strange statement, but down in her heart she thought she could if she dared to speak, but really she was mistaken; and when she did find out the actual truth she was not disappointed. When Tarrytown's finest train rolled into the station that Friday morning, Dr. and Mrs. West were the most interested watchers. When Alex and Ruth stepped from the train all four of them fell into each other's arms, and the joy of the hour was complete. To be sure they had not been gone long but it must be remembered that Ruth had never been away from home before and her absence was not to be measured by the striking of the clock alone, but by the length of the road as well. Some students go so far away from the old home and its teachings that they never get back. This noble pastor and his wife were made doubly happy because Alex and Ruth were back home in every particular. Next day, Alex roamed about town, meeting the fellows and talking of school and all that went with it. He was the very picture of manhood when at its flower. All of Alex's life he had been temperate and careful, and this, added to his full development of body, made him a shining example of physical manhood. Back at the manse, Ruth and her mother talked and laughed like two girls. Ruth confided to her mother all that had transpired in those few

months and especially about Tobe and Roy. Both of these boys had left their impressions upon Ruth's heart. While Tobe left Ruth in doubt and in slight fear, Roy had impressed her as one who could be trusted under all circumstances, even though those nice little acts of delicacy which so appeal to a girl's heart were lacking. Tobe seemed as one who had a cause and plan to work out, but Roy seemed to be a young man of destiny and duty. That Tobe was refused entrance to Princeton the second year challenged Ruth's sympathy, but her mother had her misgivings. Ruth kept nothing back from her mother, and, all that both of these boys had said and done was unfolded. Mrs. West was glad that Tobe was coming to visit them during vacation, but her satisfaction in this visit consisted in the hope that she would be able to have first-hand information of one concerning whom she already had some passing doubts. The mother of Ruth could throw no light on the statement of Roy that Tarrytown was the only place he could not visit, but she did feel that some day she would know, understand, and approve.

When Sunday morning came they were all off to church. Alex and Ruth were so happy over the prospect of seeing the church boys and girls again. Most all of the people at church received these fine young people with enthusiastic joy. But, struggle

as they would, both Alex and Ruth could not help feeling that something was wrong and out of joint. In one or two groups, gathered about the church, they were not quite so welcome, but they argued that possibly this was their imagination. When back in the manse, they ventured to mention their impressions to father and mother. So the secret was out. The parents then told them how Deacon Bush had gathered about him those who were trying to run the pastor away from his church. They told the children the outcome was still uncertain. Notwithstanding that the friends of the pastor were in the majority, no one could tell just how alert these friends would be when the inevitable test should arrive. They kept nothing back from the children as to the criticism and attacks which had been made on their father. But the one item of criticism of Dr. West which cut deepest into their hearts was that insinuating question as to where the pastor got the money to send his children to these high-class colleges. The comments had gone so far as to intimate that as there were so many boys and girls in the church who could not or would not go to school, it was not right for the pastor's children to do so. This opposition had been going on during the absence of Alex and Ruth, but Dr. and Mrs. West had determined not to let either of them know, hoping that it would adjust itself, and

they would never know. After the facts had been fully related, Ruth said, "Now, my dear father, in all of your acts of service to these people you have been my ideal. You have done your part to them and to me. I feel that I have a right to a college education, but let us pick out some poor girl of the church, and you give her the money you are spending on me and let her go to school. Maybe this act would soften the hearts of these men and they would become your friends. I cannot see how any living mortal could help loving you, Father, and I cannot bear to have you or your ministry hurt. Let me make the sacrifice, but do not interfere with brother's education." Dr. and Mrs. West listened through to the end of all that Ruth was saying, and for quite a while there was silence and tears. But Alex was the only one who could speak. "Dad," said he, "you are not only the best preacher in the land, you are also the best general that ever commanded an army. Your cause is just and I have heard you preach so often from that pulpit that God would take care of His own; let me help you apply your own gospel. Furthermore, I believe that God expects a fellow to take care of himself. Dad, you must lick 'em. I am going to stay home and help you do it." Dr. West was moved by the loyalty and love of these two fine children. To be humiliated before them and to inter-

rupt their education would be his keenest pain. It was clear that if he were forced out of his church at this time, this would be the last year of their college career. In silence and mutual sympathy they went to dinner.

During the Sunday afternoon, things were easier. They all tried to forget the family problem and enjoy each other's fellowship and love. When time came for the evening service, Alex went with his father to church and Ruth remained with her mother. While at home that evening, Ruth told her mother that she was not going back to school, but that she meant to stay at home with her and be by her side during the trials that were sure to come. Mrs. West would not consent to such an arrangement. But it was evident that Ruth was never so beautiful as in her willingness to give up all that she had ever held dear in the way of getting an education, to stay by her mother's side. When Alex and his father were returning from church, Alex said: "Dad, as long as you have such a crowd as that to preach to, and as long as you can hit the ball like you did tonight, you are sure to make a home-run. I see, right now, you are going to lick 'em. Dad, you could be President of the United States and make an opposing Congress pass your bills." Dr. West realized that these

were words of the college campus, but they were from the lips of a Christian boy who had not yet cared or needed to speak the language of the church. But, in whatever language they were spoken, they found a way to the pastor's heart.

That night, Dr. West decided to take his cause to the people, for in them lie justice and support. When all of them were back in the manse after the two services of the day, Dr. West seemed happier than he had been for months. Alex had been God's minister to him; at once, the note of victory was already sounding in his soul. With striking force came the recollection of an old statement, "No man is whipped till he is whipped in his own soul." Dr. West said, "Kiss me good-night, children, you both shall go back to school. Let us enjoy this Christmas week together. I shall win. As Alex would put it, I'll lick 'em. Come along, mother, let us take a walk in the moonlight."

CHAPTER XXIV

Clouds Before Day-Break

AFTER spending ten days, two of them Sundays, Alex and Ruth went back to school. It was uncertain as to whether they would ever be able to go longer than to finish this present session. The uncertainty as to their school life was not the blackest feature of their cloud. Their concern about the future of their father and mother was the burden upon them. Dr. West assured them that he would be all right and for them to go back to their respective colleges, and not take too much to heart the problems about him. Alex was able to throw off the gloom more easily than Ruth. She was thinking of her mother. Constantly would she recall those new deep lines on her dear mother's face, caused by worry and care. Ruth felt as though she would like to get off of the train and turn back home and take her mother in her arms and love her back into happiness. As they came nearer their destination, the strain was relieved by thoughts of their school companions and duties. This was fortunate for both of them, as the tragic and unwelcome

news of shadows gathering over the home manse had been almost too much for them, and more than young lives ought to endure. They had been taught a beautiful faith in God both by precept and example. Ruth drew Alex close to her in the Pullman seat and said, "Brother, before we separate, I want us to pray for mother and father, and also ask God to bless the dear old church in which both of us have been reared." To this request Alex agreed, if only Ruth would lead the prayer. With bowed heads right there on that flying train Ruth prayed, "Our good Heavenly Father, we want to talk to You about our earthly father. He has been and is now the good minister, his toils and triumphs are all known to Thee. Thou must love him as we love him. We are not selfish in this request, we are both willing to give up school, but we do ask Thee to let father go on doing good to those dear people back home. We beg Thee, not to let Dad's heart be broken. When the test comes, may those noble people of our church stand firm for the right. Soften the hearts of those who have been misguided by the unkind few. Then, dear Lord, wouldst Thou slip into the manse and tell our darling mother how Thou dost love her. She will understand, for when I spoke my love to her yesterday, it cheered her so much, and now if Thou wilt tell her the same thing, it will even mean more

to her. Help us to be good and true in our school work, that we may be a comfort to them and a help to the world. Show us Thy will and we will walk in it, whether or not it seems good to us. Amen." When Ruth opened her eyes, she noticed that Alex had both fists clinched and was glancing from one side to the other, indicating the method by which he wanted to express himself. She did not speak of this to Alex, but it passed through her mind that she had never seen him when he looked so much like an athlete as now. A most wonderful thing entered into this prayer. It so happened that this particular train was trying out a broadcasting station, placed on top of the car. The experiment proved to be successful and this childish prayer was caught and carried clear as a ringing bell back to Tarrytown, where groups of the opposition were "listening in," and likewise it was heard by the hundreds of friends of Dr. West. Better still, that prayer was caught by God's Broadcasting Station and went on into the skies. One would think that this prayer would have melted the heart of even Deacon Bush and turned him and them back to friendship's road. But we must reckon with that strange fact in church life, that hate and dislike to the pastor, when once aroused, never relents. This hate must surely be one of the heart's "unpardonable sins," for human and divine grace seems to be a

savor of "death unto death" to the disaffected church member. On the other hand, this prayer did its work in the hearts of the friends of West. From that hour there was never an uncertainty as to the activity of the supporters, as to what they would do. No newspaper was necessary to spread the news of that radio prayer. It was the talk of Tarrytown that day, so that by the time the afternoon paper was printed this strange and wonderful prayer was so well known that the newspaper account of it was stale indeed.

Like every other dark cloud, this one had its silver lining. Ruth knew that she must talk this trouble over with either Tobe or Roy, or both. She had tried for weeks to decide just which one of these boys was most worthy of her confidence and of her love. With this new experience of her father's crisis, she found her friend as well as herself. After reflection, of course, Roy would be her confidant. She could not explain just why this was true, but she had no doubt as to the one to whom to turn. This was a great boon to Ruth, for she had really longed for a sign to point out the road her heart was to travel. It was a small token, to be sure, but it was the right beginning of things, that she was seeking. Love must have wisdom as well as sentiment. So when Roy met Ruth and Alex in Washington she was delighted. The three of them rode on to Princeton together, but

Roy continued on to New York with Ruth. This was her chance and she unfolded to Roy all that she had learned of the church affairs at home. When she had finished, she then told Roy that he might not be interested in her any longer as possibly this was her last college year, and besides he must know the humiliation which was likely to come to the West family, and these two facts must be understood by Roy so that he could determine his future relation to Ruth in the fullest light. When the whole story had been related, Roy simply remarked, "Ruth, I had already pondered the whole story, and my course is still clear. You are dearer to me than ever before." The thing that puzzled Ruth was the statement, "I had already pondered the whole story." How could he have done such a thing? How did he know? This, added to the other mystery of his being unable to go to Tarrytown, left her brain in a whirl, which almost amounted to distress. But as hard as it was, she contented herself to await the explanation.

School started and the routine of study and all that goes with school life began and went on as before Christmas. Back in Tarrytown, the struggle was on and gathering further gossip and excitement. One day the quiet, dignified Deacon Stone called to see the pastor. He was one of those noble church officials who never likes to be in the limelight. He

had gone on through the years, doing, in silence, his duty to the church, pastor and God. It is as strange as it is glorious that, when a pastor needs help, there is some man who has been prepared for the occasion. The entire church had respect and love for Stone. He could scarcely speak in public, but every word he uttered was of weight and influence. He was a poor man, but his faithful tithe given into the Lord's treasury placed him far ahead of some who were rich. Deacon Stone opened his conversation with the pastor by an apology for coming on this errand. Then he said, "Dr. West, your work is not done in Tarrytown, and I have called to assure you that conditions must be readjusted so that your influence shall reach further and further. I do not mean that it has been curtailed, but you deserve to work against a less strong current. Do not fear, Pastor, we are determined that it shall be done. We want you to take Mrs. West and go away, we care not where, and spend a month. You can go to see your children or to some other place of your choice. We will wire you when it is all done and you can come back to us as a new pastor would and under new conditions. We feel that we have not been fair in our dealing with you to allow these men to bother you as long as they have. I am authorized to tender you this check for your expenses and bid you leave all to us for

four weeks." This statement from Deacon Stone was so frank, so reassuring and so sincere that Dr. West could not treat it lightly. But to leave and trust his interests in the hands of others gave him pause. With two people he wanted to counsel. One was his wife and the other was Blinker. From his wife he must learn her wish, and from Blinker he could always get the inside facts of the church. Blinker could also look ahead and tell into what any movement would terminate. Mrs. West agreed to go, but not to the children, as much as she wanted to see them. Their young lives must not be drawn further into this unpleasant affair, and she considered it fortunate that they were away. Blinker was sought and his advice asked. He at once told Dr. West that he was aware of the visit of Deacon Stone, in fact, he and Stone had arranged the plan. Blinker said, "Dr. West, this is a matter about which you need not have any concern. There can be but one outcome of our movement. We do not mean to do a thing without your knowledge; we only want to do it for you while you are resting. I have always known that the overwhelming majority of the church is with you, and since the prayer of Ruth on the train the other morning this good sentiment has been crystallized and you shall be set free." Dr. West had never left one of his battles to be fought by

another, so he hesitated in this case, but finally he agreed to leave on Monday.

Dr. and Mrs. West decided to take a boat trip to Bermuda Islands. He spoke tender words of love to his church on Sunday, and on Monday the pastor and his wife started on a delightful but anxious voyage.

Monday morning, Deacon Stone asked Mrs. Black, the secretary, to notify all the members of the Board to be present at an official meeting that evening. As she called the various members, Mrs. Black realized that she was performing an important part in the history of the church. It was well known that she was not only efficient, but the entire church knew that she was loyal and possessed a very rare quality of good judgment. No member of the staff deserved more credit for the wonderful upbuilding of the church than did this young woman. She knew when to speak, and when to be silent. Her graces of head and heart were valuable beyond description. She finished her official notification by one o'clock, and informed Deacon Stone that all had promised to be present. That night every member of the Board was present. Deacon Stone was selected to act as chairman in the absence of Dr. West. Chairman Stone stated the object of the meeting. Among other things he said, "Let no man present get the idea that this Board has the right to call a preacher or depose

him. This body of men is a group of servants to the church, and aids to the pastor, and not his bosses or directors. We have met here to give Deacon Bush and the others who sympathize with him a chance to present their grievances and, when that is done, we will bring them all before the church, and see who will be sustained by the action of a democratic and self-controlling body. I might further state that it is my firm belief that whoever is found to be in the minority, when the church finally acts, will be respectfully asked to retire from the church life, and give the majority a chance to carry out its policies and plans in the church. This back-biting and clandestine work must either stop or the perpetrators must put the rest of us out and rule the church according to their own wishes. Two cannot walk together unless they be agreed. The whole matter will start here tonight, and must be settled one way or the other within the next two weeks. As to my part, I want to say, once for all, that I am on the side of the pastor and his wonderful work. The meeting is now open for remarks." It was noticed that Deacon Bush mopped his brow nervously. His followers glanced at him in evident discomfort. They had not expected to have the object of the meeting approached so directly. They had meant to argue their case in a different way. Silence for a long time

characterized the meeting. Presently one of the friends of Dr. West asked that a tabulation of the charges against West be submitted, and reasons shown as to why he should be displaced. This was an entirely fair suggestion, but it was not the plan of procedure that Bush wanted. The Board insisted that this be done and without delay. A copy of these written charges and reasons would be placed in the hands of some of West's supporters, and answers to same could be presented. For a long time the work of the pastor had been criticised in the dark and with no opportunity for defense, which is always cowardly and illegal before any court. The opposing members of the Board did not want to commit their charges to writing, but four-fifths of the Board demanded it. An adjourned meeting was called for Wednesday evening, at which time their formal and written charges must be in hand or the opposition would either have to retire from membership on the Board or make an apology and agree to go forward in harmony with the pastor and the church. Two days of consternation reigned in the camp of the disaffected. But late Wednesday afternoon they met in Bush's office and framed the following:

"We charge against the pastorate of Dr. West:

"First: That he is determined to have his own way.

"Second: That he neglected the church for six months in campaigning the state for the 'Veteran's Reward.'

"Third: That he employs too many people on the church's paid staff.

"Fourth: That he has extended his pastorate too long and that his usefulness is waning.

"Fifth: That he was discourteous to Deacon Bush when he told him that he was not doing his duty by the finances of the church.

"Sixth: That Dr. West is spending too much money in the education of his children at expensive schools. The church could have a cheaper pastor."

When the Board met that Wednesday evening, Presiding Officer Stone opened the meeting just where they had ended on Monday evening. He called for the bill of charges. Beverly Polk, a tall, raw-boned, stooped fellow, had been appointed to read the bill. He had not been a deacon more than three years, and was the head bookkeeper of the "Hawkins, Stark and Bush Department Store." This poor fellow did not dare to oppose his employers, especially Bush. So he read the paper, and it was signed by himself, Bush and two others. When the reading was over it was moved that copies of these charges be printed so that each member of the Board of Deacons could have one, and that the following Sunday

week be set as the day that these charges be read to the church and acted upon by the same. The motion was carried and this plan was ordered. The meeting adjourned. Of course, the families and friends of these four deacons would vote with them. In addition, there were many others who had been subsidized by Bush's money in an indirect way. Certainly there had been enough to create much noise and gossip. Sunday week came and, after a brief devotional service, Deacon Stone was elected temporary chairman of the church conference. The church clerk was asked to read the bill of charges, which he did in a loud, clear tone. Deathlike stillness fell over the great audience.

"In answer to the first charge," said Sam Thomas, the Sunday School Superintendent, "I have walked and worked with Pastor West more closely than any of you. In no sense does he want his own way. He wants God's way and finds it. Even if he did want his own way, all of us know that he knows more about how to run this church than we do."

"May I speak to the second charge?" said Miriam Hope Cooper. "I am glad Dr. West spent six months on the 'Veteran's Reward.' My dear grandfather died in poverty and distress, but thanks to Dr. West, many another dear old preacher will approach a more comfortable sunset."

Brother Bob Kitt, a carpenter, who had but little of this world's goods, said, "I know we do not have too many paid church workers. I see the need of two more right now, and if Brother Bush will pay for one of them, I will pay the salary of the other."

"The curse of the church is short pastorates," said Prof. Gilbert Wayne, of the Tarrytown High School. "Dr. West is just getting acquainted with this city and his church. He is just beginning his best work. This is my answer to the fourth charge."

"That this church may be informed, I want to tell you that Deacon Bush gives less than fifty dollars per year to this church, and he is worth a half a million," said Henry Canfield, chairman of the Board of Trustees. "I was present when Dr. West told Mr. Bush of his duty. My only answer is that the pastor did not tell him half enough."

At the conclusion of Canfield's statement, in which he mentioned the name of Bush, among some there was almost a hiss. This had never been known before. Many in the church thought that Bush was a great local contributor.

Then Blinker asked to be heard. The second time in the long years of his connection with this church, had anyone ever heard him say a word. "I was present when Brother West got the money to send his boy and girl to school. I was the Notary Public who

executed the paper by which he borrowed all the equity and savings he had on his life insurance policies. He uses none of our money. The sacrifices of himself and wife keep these dear young people in college. Any foul insinuation to the contrary comes from the pit." Then Moderator Stone asked if anybody had anything further to say on either side of the question. None dared to speak. It was perfectly clear that if a word had been said against West, the speaker would have done so at a terrific risk. A standing vote was called for. Those who were in favor of West and his work were asked to stand. Then those who were opposed were asked to stand. An accurate count of both was made. Six hundred and ninety voted for Dr. West and forty-eight voted against him. A motion was made and carried that all who would not be reconciled be granted church letters then and there. Of the forty-eight, twenty changed their attitude and remained, but twenty-eight letters were granted that day and Bush's letter was written first. He never put it in any other church for the good reason that no other church would have him.

A wireless message was sent that afternoon as follows:

"To Dr. and Mrs. James West,

"Care S. S. Olympic.

"You are now our pastor, with none to disturb. Come when it suits you. Back door of the church was opened today and a revival came in at the front door.

"First Church, Tarrytown."

CHAPTER XXV

Alex's Opportunity and Ruth's Choice

THE new sunshine on the manse at Tarrytown reached to Princeton and Smith Colleges. Now, Alex and Ruth could give themselves to their work. It was not nearly Easter vacation when one day a handsome Packard car stopped in front of Ruth's boarding hall and a young man rang the door bell and asked to see Miss Ruth West, at the same time presenting his engraved card bearing the name "Tobe Long." While the maid was gone to call Ruth, Tobe walked back to speak to his companion in the car, who proved to be his cousin, Jake Long, whom Ruth had met at Princeton. Tobe then returned to the hall just as Ruth appeared at the door. Tobe asked Ruth to join them in a ride about the countryside. This, of course, would have been a violation of the school decorum even though there was no direct law against it. Therefore, Ruth thanked Tobe for his kindness and promptly declined. At this Tobe manifested an evident but silent resentment. Ruth was disappointed at his attitude. For him she had held a true respect which at times

had been a warm friendship. But Ruth invited Tobe to come and visit for a little while in the drawing room. Once seated Tobe began to tell Ruth how he remained in the East before going back to his Western home just to be able to see her. He went so far as to tell her that he entertained the hope that she would consent to go with him when he did go. At this sudden suggestion Ruth was shocked but tried to treat it all as a pleasantry. She said, "Tobe, I have just begun my college career, and I am committed to my course." He then told her how many a girl had run away from school and married. To this Ruth replied, "This will never be said of me." After about thirty minutes of strained and somewhat embarrassed conversation, Tobe rose to go. "Ruth," said Tobe, "may I see you tomorrow? It is Sunday and you will be free." To this request Ruth replied, "Yes, you and your cousin come by in the morning and we will all go to church together." Again Tobe was disappointed and said, "Ruth, I never go to church, I feel that this thing called religion is a thing of the past." "But," said Ruth, "I have a different idea about it and I am going to church tomorrow, and I would be happy to have you and your cousin, Jake, join me." Tobe saw that there was no use to try to turn Ruth from her course. She was a young woman of strength of character. Before the caller

left the hall he had secured an engagement to call on Sunday evening. He joined his cousin and they drove away. Tobe felt that he had been foiled in every attempt he had made in his appeal to Ruth. To him she appeared more beautiful than ever before. Her firm stand by her conviction made her even more attractive, although he had lost at every point. When he came Sunday evening, Ruth was dressed elegantly though simply. She did not forget that she was a school girl; in keeping with this she was adorned in one of those attractive costumes which her own good taste had purchased just a few weeks before. Ruth was jolly and care-free, as innocence and youth always is. Tobe was, in a sense, happy, but fully conscious that he was a loser. Several other young couples were in the drawing room during the evening and this was not to Tobe's liking. It seemed that he constantly wanted to say something or do something that the circumstances did not permit. Otherwise Tobe's manners were gentlemanly and he kept up his good record. Though Ruth was conscious that they had not agreed upon any great cardinal principle, she liked him just the same. There was a great challenge to her heart despite the fact that she did not fully trust him. He seemed to be slipping unbidden into her soul. Before the evening was over, Tobe told Ruth that he and his cousin were

starting back to Colorado in a few days, but that he expected her to keep her engagement during the vacation. He told her that he could hardly wait until school was out, when he expected to drive his car back across many miles to see her. This brought its thrill to Ruth's deepest soul. As he arose to go, Tobe said, "Now, my dear girl, I am going to leave you this book and I hope you will read it, for it expresses better than I can, much of the philosophy of my thinking. Good-night, I will see you in the summer." In a moment he was gone and at the hotel joined his cousin. The next day they started for New York and after a day or two were on the way to their homes in Colorado.

As soon as Ruth could do so she began to read the book, thinking she would get a glimpse of Tobe's real heart in the pages, and she did. After getting about one-third of the way, she found that the book was presenting the Parisian position on "Common Law Marriages," "Free Love," and kindred subjects. The very lines of the book alarmed her and she, at once, saw that even the silent printed pages made an atmosphere in her room that she was afraid to close her eyes in sleep. What a terrible thing if her mother and father should come and find her keeping company with such thoughts. Yet, she wished she could sit down in the home-manse and

tell them what the book said, where it came from and how it came to her while she was so unsuspecting. She could not decide what to do with it. To be sure, it was her property, and she could burn it if she wanted to, but that was not what she wanted to do with it. It and her Bible should not rest on the same table in the room occupied by a girl who had come from a home of beautiful Christian refinement. Besides, her own principles had been settled and she determined to dispose of the giver of this book by sending it back to him. If she could use the book for this, then it would add its value to her life. As she thought the matter over she would be first indignant and then sorry for Tobe. Maybe she could be used to enlighten his mind and turn him away from such a philosophy. In a few weeks Ruth received a letter from Tobe, and this gave her the chance she wanted. Within one hour after getting the letter she was wrapping the book, preparatory to mailing it. As she was getting the book ready a train of thought was going through her mind. "Would Roy give me such a book to read? Is Tobe worse or different from other men? Is this the reason they refused him entrance to Princeton his second year? Why did he ever give me this book?" These questions pressed in on her mind. After the book was tied and ready for the post office, Ruth wrote a polite

but positive note. In this brief letter she expressed her surprise and disappointment at the contents of the book and frankly told Tobe there could be nothing in common between them. She wished him well, even told him that she would pray for his soul, and bade him a kindly adieu.

Far out in Colorado in a little village post office, Tobe received the book and letter. He felt his failure. For the moment, he wished that his life was like that of the pure, white-souled girl back in Smith College. In some sense he thought of Ruth in the light of the philosophy of this book. But on the other hand he thought of her as different from the other women of his experience. If his way of thinking could ever be changed it would be by the high ideals of that simple school girl, the child of the manse. "I want her, but do I want her as the loyal and true wife of my heart?" This was the question he asked himself, and it was a question that he alone could answer. A letter of apology was written and along with the request for forgiveness was the plea that she not break the engagement for the summer. He asked for another chance. In the hope of a better experience in the future, Ruth agreed to keep the engagement, but until then no further communication.

Two weeks after Alex and Ruth were home for

the summer vacation, Tobe drove into Tarrytown in a beautiful new car. He and his cousin had driven from Colorado, and their main objective was to make the long-talked-of visit to Ruth. He called at the manse and was introduced to Dr. and Mrs. West. His conduct was such that he impressed the pastor as a cynic who had very little use for the church. Notwithstanding this attitude, his manners were good and he was respectful. He had not been limited in his expenditure of money, and he was liberal in giving Ruth a nice time.

Alex overheard a brief conversation near the drug store one day which gave him the opportunity which he had earnestly desired. Joe Thompson, one of the partisan friends of Bush, and one who had been let out of the church a few months previous, was standing with some careless, critical fellows when Tobe and Ruth drove by. It was then that Joe Thompson laughed derisively and pointed to the young couple in the car and said, "Now, boys, you can see where Ruth West got her money to go to school." The remark made a double impression. Some of the fellows laughed and others silently turned away. When the crowd had dispersed and Joe Thompson had gone back to his office, Alex West called on him. He introduced himself to Thompson and then said, "Mr. Thompson, I heard

what you said a little while ago about where my sister got her money to go to school. I do not want to misunderstand you, so I have called to ask you just what you meant by that remark. I hope you had no ulterior suggestion about my sister and her affairs. If you had none, then a written and signed statement from you to this effect will be entirely satisfactory. If you really meant a reflection upon her integrity, then I will ask you to go at once with me and reassemble all those men in whose presence you made the remark, and retract it and apologize to me and all concerned or take the consequences." At first, Thompson attempted to resent what young West had said. Alex, calm and serene as a man who sits down to read his morning paper, demanded, "Mr. Thompson, which course do you choose to follow?" To which Thompson replied, "I choose to go on with my work and I ask you to leave my office." Alex got up from his chair and walked over nearer to Thompson, who was facing him. As the two men confronted each other it was easy to see that Thompson was larger and taller than Alex and about five years his senior. On the other hand, Alex was an athlete and in perfect condition. Alex spoke first as the two men faced each other. "Mr. Thompson, I can forget your attitude toward my father in the recent unpleasantness in which you took the part of a tool of a man

who was and is your master; I can even forgive you for that, but when you make an insinuating remark about my innocent and defenseless sister, my resentment knows no bounds. I give you only one minute to make amends." Thompson received the ultimatum, just as any other slanderous coward would, with fear and trembling. But he realized that his bluffing had carried him beyond retreat. So he stood in silence. Alex swung his great fist to Thompson's left jaw and knocked him flat upon the floor. As Thompson got up he picked up a golf club and started towards Alex. The young student was too quick for the big office man and before the club could be swung, Alex seized it and wrenched it from Thompson's hand, broke it and threw it into the corner. Then Thompson rushed towards Alex with both fists clinched. Alex then hit him square between the eyes and Thompson fell across the desk and hit the floor on the other side. Just as Alex rushed around the desk to finish his well-begun job, two men ran in from an adjoining office and found Thompson groaning on the floor. They picked the wounded man up and by the time they had the blood washed from his face, Alex was at the city hall to plead guilty and pay his fine. But seven men had arrived at the city hall ahead of him and each wanted the privilege of paying it. Thompson did not stay in the

hospital but three or four days and could have been back in his office if he had not had to wear a bandage over his eyes for nearly two weeks. All Alex had to say was that he really desired an opportunity to express himself on the underhanded way some people had treated his father, but he was sorry it had to come by the way of his sister.

Tobe had not been very happy for the past few days. He felt that whatever of sentiment Ruth had for him before was now less evident. Hitherto, his money power had purchased for him all that he wanted. He was about to meet his first failure. He and Ruth evidently belonged to different realms. Of course, Ruth could not entirely ignore the appeal that was in his great wealth. She kept hoping that she would find in him those other qualities worthy of her love. If she could only be in a position to make life easier and sweeter for her dear mother and father, but she would not sacrifice one single item of her principles for even so wonderful a purpose as that. She was a child of Christianity and the Church, and Tobe was a man of the world and infidelity. Could these two ever came to that oneness in their thinking that would make it possible for them to be anything other than just formal friends? One evening as they strolled together through the park, Tobe told her of his intention of leaving for the West two days later.

He told her freely of his love for her; then he added, "Ruth, I want to live with you, if not forever, then just for a while." She quickly caught the phrase "just for a while" and demanded that he explain what he meant. Immediately there came back to her several repulsive sentences that she had read in the book which he had given her at Smith College. Then he explained his belief in the "Companionate Marriage." "It need not last any longer than when either one cares to be free from the relationship." Ruth started to scream, but suppressed it as many people were near-by. She had not known that anybody believed in such a thing. The frightened girl asked that he take her home at once. She felt sure now of that carnal nature which she thought she had discovered once or twice before in certain actions of his. She did not know why she felt that way, but she was alarmed as they had to walk through the dark part of the street which led toward the manse. For a fuller understanding, as they neared home, she openly asked Tobe if his invitation to her to go with him back to his home meant only a trial marriage. He finally admitted that was the case. "Then," said Ruth, "you need not go with me into my home. We are in sight of it now, and I will bid you and your millions good-bye forever and forever. I will explain to the family that we have disagreed and that you

have gone away. Unless you agree to this, I will have to make a more complete explanation, and it might be more embarrassing for you to get away." Tobe went into a rage of temper and told Ruth that he had only developed into that broader and more scientific life into which all well-informed people were coming. He actually threatened Ruth that if she did not give him some encouragement for the future he would employ some more coercive plan. "Tobe, I am in calling distance of father and brother," returned Ruth, "and one more word of what I consider an attack on my virtue, my protectors will be with me. I bid you again, good-bye." Whereupon Tobe growled out, "You will not always be in calling distance of protectors."

Ruth ran home and tried to be pleasant, simply saying that Tobe and his cousin were going away tomorrow. It was several days before Ruth could tell her mother all that had been said and what had happened. Soon it became satisfying knowledge in the manse that Ruth was rid of this strange man of modern thinking, and all hoped that she would never meet him again. But she did meet him once more, and then the tragedy of her life was enacted.

CHAPTER XXVI

Stirring the Eagle's Nest

THE custom of the parent eagle is to tear up the nest when the young eagle's are able to fly so that they will go out upon their own wings. In one way or another nature does exactly the same thing for young people. Alex had graduated from Princeton and the call of his chosen vocation made it necessary for him to break the home-ties and go forth and try out his own ability. He selected journalism, having specialized in this while in school, his being the prize essay of the class. Besides, he had done much work in this field during his stay in that world known as college life. Roy Prince, who graduated in the same class with Alex, had no home, and was at a loss to know just where he was going. He had marvelous gifts for public speaking and was the orator of his class. Being a devout Christian he had done much public service in making religious addresses. In a few months after graduation, Alex secured a position on the staff of the "Golden Gate Review," one of the really great magazines of the West. Roy decided that he would

take post-graduate work at Columbia University, specializing in New Testament Greek and religious research. He had not fully decided what his life's work should be, but at any rate he was following his taste and inclination in this post-graduate work. Ruth had one more year in Smith College. All through the following year good reports came from Alex as to his progress in his new position. He had been selected as assistant editor and had the confidence of the rich owners of the publication. His father and mother now realized that he had permanently left the "Old Roof Tree."

While our children are in school we still feel our ownership, but when once out in the world of work, we know the eagle's nest has been broken up.

During this last year of Ruth's stay in college she saw Roy often. He frequently spent the week-ends with her and was so fine in his bearing and noble in his ideals that Ruth had come to look on his visits as something more than a lover's visits. She felt that he was father, brother, friend and sweetheart. His work at Columbia had proven to be so fascinating that he talked much of it and what it really might lead to in his life. He would have had enough capital left from his small estate to begin a fairly good business, had he so desired, when he left Princeton. But business did not appeal to

him, so he decided to spend the rest of his income in further study. Once, while making a week-end visit to Ruth in her senior year, he told her some of the impressions of his soul about being a minister. When he told her of his possible decision in this direction, he noticed that she was silent throughout the whole story. The deeper Ruth's feelings on any question, the more silent she was. This was one of her characteristics. Roy interpreted her tears and silence as expressing her disappointment. He knew the sacrifices and hardships that Dr. West had gone through in his labors as pastor, better than the girl realized. Ruth was soon to go out into some fine field of work, for which she had prepared herself in college, and, if she had ever thought of reciprocating his great love for her to the point of marrying him, could she be happy to turn her fect back to another manse and that for life? All these reflections went through the mind of Roy while Ruth was struggling to recover herself sufficiently to speak. The point had not been reached in their courtship where there was an engagement or even an understanding. Yet the shadow of that fact hovered over and near both of them in their many discussions and conversations, so, the shadow played its part in Roy's revelation as to himself and the ministry. While he was grieved for the effect the statement had made upon Ruth, he was at

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the same time glad he had discovered that she really cared. This spoke more to him as to her real thought than anything she had ever said. Following a pause in which there was a perfect understanding and no awkwardness, Roy, speaking with soul sincerity, said, "Ruth, the time has come when I must try to say to you something of what I have had in my heart and which I am sure your keen understanding has discerned. My love for you is and has been as deep and real as any man ever had for any woman. During your school years I have tried to be as considerate as my feelings are deep. From the day of our Thanksgiving game until now I have known that my heart was fixed, and if it does not seem too presuming, I will further say that I believe God made you for me. My love for you is next to my love for God. Therefore, the destiny of my life depends upon you and Him. I must find myself and my life's work by counsel with you and Him. You are present with me like the delicate, inspiring perfume of a flower. Your school days are over in a few weeks and I have bided the time to tell you this story." Ruth had heard the empty and selfish love talk of Tobe and others, but there was that something about this college chum of her brother that had a new meaning, method and motive. "I know that our companionship has been that of contentment and satisfaction," said Ruth,

"but I do not know whether we are ready to go further with our friendship or not. My mother and father have never met you. Once I asked you to visit us, and you declined." "Yes, dear, I had to. You will know some day soon why I did, and let me assure you that when you understand you will approve. Please suspend judgment on that for the present. You know I have been reared an orphan and certain limitations have been about my life. I must decide my life's work soon and nobody in the skies can help me but God, and nobody on earth can aid me but you. That is the reason I come to you on the eve of your graduation. If our lives drift closer and if you should eventually agree to become my wife, I would not be able to give you all the things of this life that you deserve, provided I hear the call of the ministry, but I do deem it honest and fair to tell you of what now seems to be my course." "The sweetest home to me in all the world." replied Ruth, "is in the manse. There I was born, there I played, there I have loved, and there I have no objection to staying. Roy, you owe no apology to me nor to other mortals if you want to enter the ministry." These last words were the words Roy had been waiting for, and he was not surprised, for Ruth's devotion to her father had always been one of her charms. As Roy was leaving for New York he stood before Ruth and said, "Dar-

ling, when I see you again, it will be on your graduation day, and my love will know no bounds. Soon, thereafter, you will leave for your home, but my heart will follow you, and some day I will come to you. You say that your mother's illness will prevent your parents from attending your graduation, and I know that I cannot take their places. On the other hand, Ruth, you have come nearer filling that lonesome place in my motherless heart than all other people." As Roy held the pretty trembling hand of Ruth to his lips, between kisses he would say, "Ruth, on your graduation day, let me be a substitute for your family, let me be your lover." "As you wish, my Prince Royal," said Ruth, and Roy Prince hurried away to catch his train for Columbia University.

One week later found commencement at Smith College in full swing, and, if ever a girl looked the part of an honor graduate from that great school, Ruth West was that person. Her beautiful, clear skin, her sky-blue eyes, her tall, graceful form, the becoming black cap and gown all together made a picture worthy the great soul within. When her name was called and she arose to receive her diploma, Roy felt that he must shout out the fact that she was his friend. He felt that everybody must know what a wonderful woman she was. The beautiful flowers that he had sent her rested at her feet, but how much

they lacked of being pretty enough for her, was the thought passing through his mind. He was thinking further how fine it would be if he could take the train next morning with Ruth and go to her home and walk down the street by her side and say to the fine people of Tarrytown, "She is mine," then his conquest in the realm of love would be complete. But the realization that, though Ruth would consent to this, he could not yet go to Tarrytown, was a grief all his own. After the great day of graduation was over, Ruth dressed herself in the beautiful gown that her sick mother had sent her, each stitch representing a heart-throb of love. The dress was one of those beautiful things that love and good taste could create. A hat to match the dress, and gloves of the most elegant style all went to make up a perfectly dressed woman when Ruth came out of her room to go with Roy to dinner at the hotel. When dinner was over they went to the theatre, and then back to the hall. It did seem to Ruth that the sweetest day a girl had ever spent was that day. "Ruth," said Roy, as he was turning away from the dormitory hall that night, "if you never give me more joy than the happiness of this day, then I am of all men most fortunate. My eyes have looked upon your beautiful face, features and form. My ears have heard you speak, and my soul has felt your presence.

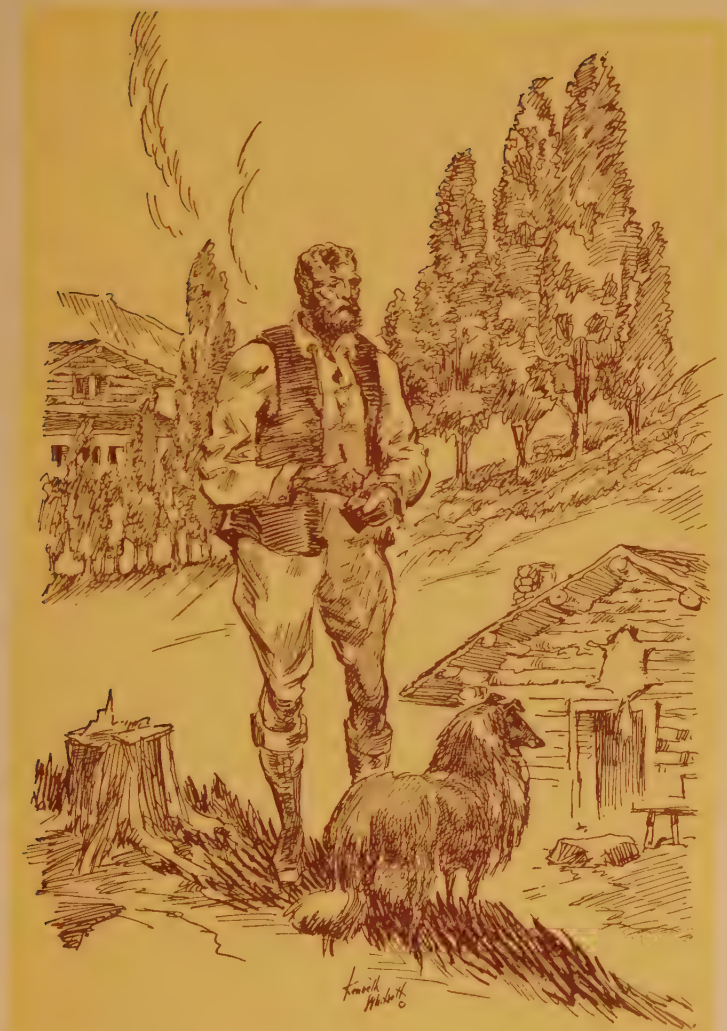
If I were to die tonight, Heaven could not be its best to me, for I would naturally compare it with the joy of this day, and the best I could then say of Heaven would be that it is a continuation of bliss, and not the beginning of it." As he held Ruth close to his heart he added, "There can be even a greater day than this, and that is our wedding day, and my prayer is that it will not be four years in arriving." "Remember, Roy, that love works faster than the mind and completes its curriculum quicker." After Roy had arranged to call for Ruth in time for her to catch the nine o'clock train the next morning for home, he bade her good-night. Of course Roy went with Ruth as far as Washington. They would have spent the day in the capital but for the fact that Mrs. West was ill and Ruth must lose no time in reaching her. On her arrival home Ruth was met by Dr. West, and, when the beautiful daughter reached the manse, she found her mother somewhat improved. The coming of her daughter made life brighter for Mrs. West, and everybody expected that soon she would be on the road to recovery.

Dr. West was to do some lecturing and preaching out West during the summer, so a fine plan was arranged. Alex was in Denver, so it was planned that Mrs. West and Ruth would take a furnished house at Silver Poplar Camp, out in the Colorado

Mountains, and occasionally Alex could run out to see them and Dr. West could also visit them between his lecture engagements. The physicians had recommended mountain climate for Mrs. West and everything seemed ideal. Silver Poplar Camp was about sixty miles from Denver and it could hardly be called a camp. The houses were far apart but in beautiful settings. The house that the Wests engaged was one of the larger buildings, with a large hall, kitchen, living room and three bed-rooms. The cool weather and plenty of rain caused the flowers to bloom all summer. The tall silver poplar trees, with an abundance of undergrowth, made the place a veritable beauty spot. The nearest house was a small cottage about three hundred feet away, and since there was a growth of small trees and a rose fence between the cottage and the big house, it seemed further away than it really was. The summer cottagers told the Wests that one individual man had occupied that special cottage for two months every summer for eight or ten years. He was a strange but very honorable character. Sometimes a young man would come for a week or two and then go away. One of the remarkable things about that strange man who would come there was, that he would not go out in the day-time for the first weeks he was there, but after that, when his beard had grown long, he would

be seen more often. He was a favorite with the children, and he was always kind and patient with them. His constant companion was his dog Ring. They seemed to be comrades. It was said that no accident and no lawlessness had ever been known in Silver Poplar Camp, and thus it seemed to be just the place for sick and tired people to rest.

It now appeared that the broken-up nest at Tarrytown would get together occasionally in a new nest in the quiet, health-giving camp of the Rockies. Mrs. West improved from the day they arrived. After they had been there two weeks, she could walk a mile a day and sleep in comfort. Once within these two weeks they saw their neighbor in the near-by cottage go out about dusk, but he never disturbed them. They had heard his name was "Nestor," being the first inhabitant of the camp.



NESTOR AND SILVER POPLAR

"They called him 'Nestor,' he being the first inhabitant of the camp"

CHAPTER XXVII

A Life Time in a Day

N a Denver hotel, Alex chanced to meet Tobe and his cousin Jake. They chatted a little while about some things that took place at Princeton during the one indifferent year that these two boys spent there. Of course, Alex had very little in common with them, but he felt compelled to be, at least, formally polite. In the course of the brief conversation he casually mentioned the fact that his mother and sister were spending the summer in a lodge at "Silver Poplar Camp," and that he was spending Sundays with them. The conversation was over and Alex went about his work for the "Golden Gate Review," and the two boys continued their loafing visit to the metropolis. That night when they were in the room and both were under the influence of whiskey, Tobe addressed his cousin, Jake. "I am going to 'Silver Poplar Camp' to see Ruth West. When I last left her I reminded her that there would come a time when I would see her unprotected by her father and brother, and now the opportunity has come to my door. 'Silver

Poplar' is near our ranch and I want you to go with me some night and I will see to it that Ruth is not so independent as she was the last time I saw her." To this Jake replied: "Tobe, I have never deserted you in my life, but I certainly do advise you to attempt nothing of the kind. This will be an adventure of danger such as you have never attempted." "Damn your danger, Jake. I have always had my way, and I am not afraid. Besides, the ranch of my father controls this section and I will have no trouble in escaping danger. I love that girl, in a certain way, and if I cannot conquer her by one means I will by another. Get yourself ready, Old Top, for next week we will visit that lodge after night." Of course Jake was hesitating about going with Tobe on such an errand, but they had been so tied up in other escapades that one dared not desert the other. "We will see about it," said Jake, as they went out on the street to get another drink.

Late one afternoon the following week, Tobe and Jake saddled their horses, for when they knew that they were going to drink they always went on horseback and left their automobile at home. When they had mounted these fleet-footed animals they started towards "Silver Poplar," stopping to get a supply of whiskey on the way. When they arrived at the camp it was nearly dark. They spent some time in locating

the lodge in which the Wests were living. They then surveyed the entire surroundings, and the only house near the lodge was the little cottage just beyond the skirt of woods, which they took to be only a little servant house. They drank just enough to make them reckless. They dared not get drunk, knowing this would put them at a disadvantage. They hitched their horses about two hundred yards from the lodge, but very much nearer the little cottage, unwittingly thinking they would be in less danger from the inhabitants of the cottage than from those in the lodge, if it became necessary for them to mount hurriedly. They waited till nine-thirty and then knocked at the front door of the lodge. The two lone women were alarmed, but Mrs. West opened the door. When they recognized Tobe and Jake they were more or less relieved as they considered them, at least, friends. Invitations to seats were extended to the belated visitors. General conversation as to the mountains and the items of interest attaching thereto was engaged in until Mrs. West and Ruth had come to feel less alarmed. An hour or two went by and as it was nearly twelve o'clock, Mrs. West felt that these boys should be going. Evidently nervousness and alarm had come back to both of the women. Finally Tobe turned to Ruth and said, "We have come here to finish the plan so abruptly broken off the night before

I left you in Tarrytown." Turning his eyes to both women in quick succession, he continued, "I do not want either of you to be frightened, for if you do as we say, then no bodily harm of any nature will come to either of you." Turning to Jake, Tobe commanded, "Take Mrs. West into that room and I will stay in here with Ruth. We will leave the connecting door open. Come, ladies, no harm, provided you are quiet and obedient to our orders." The two women went ghastly white when the savage nature was revealed and the command uttered. Ruth gave a sharp wail. "Hush! Quiet! Everything depends on silence and co-operation. Without lying, I want the privilege of saying to the world that I spent the night with you alone in a room in this lodge. That is all. We four can sit here all night facing each other and talk the night away. I must clip your wings, Miss West, so you cannot fly above my head." The wail that Ruth gave when she first received her orders may not have reached human ears, but it reached the ears of one almost human, for the faithful old watch-dog of the nearby cottage heard it and barked so that his master could not sleep. In all the summers that this mysterious character and Ring had spent in the cottage, never before had he detected such distress in the dog's voice. Something was wrong, but neither "Nestor" nor Ring knew just what it was.

In addition to that pitiful wail, the movement of the horses hitched nearby, the sound of their hoofs on the ground, their neighing, all told Ring that something must be done. Suddenly everything seemed to get still and "Nestor" tried to go back to sleep, and was succeeding fairly well when Ring spoke a language that could not be misunderstood even though it was the language of a dog's bark and whines.

Up at the lodge Tobe felt himself getting drowsy and drew from his pocket his flask and drank deeply of its conents. This done, he moved over nearer to Ruth and attempted to hold her hand, and introduced the subject of "Companionate Marriages" as he had done once before while visiting in her home. Immediately Ruth saw through the entire scheme of this awful night. By this humiliation Tobe hoped to so embarrass Ruth before the world and place her in such a compromising position that she would agree to some sort of a marriage with him so as to save her good name. The black plot so incensed Ruth that she almost lost her fear in the rising indignation of her insulted womanhood. Righteous wrath can gain a victory while fear is crying. So Ruth's wrath proved her deliverer. When the scheme dawned upon her, Ruth rushed out the side door into the kitchen where she had left the long, keen, steel carving knife. She knew that if she could reach that

knife she could vindicate her virtue to a world even if that same world should brand her as a murderess. Of the two evils, she would choose the latter. This might be right or wrong, but this was the best conclusion she could reach under the stress of this hellish hour. As she rushed into the kitchen she ran against the small china closet and turned it over; the crash was like the voice of a cannon on the stillness of the night. At this noise, Ring went wild. He barked with every breath and clawned at the door of his master. "Nestor" hurriedly dressed and grabbing his old hunting pistol, followed Ring towards the lodge. As he approached the house he could hear and see something was wrong. He thought only of burglars. But oh! if the intruders of that house had been there to steal mere purses and jewels! Anyhow, the cottage neighbor fired two shots. These shots threw the two black cowards into a panic, but the same shots were billows of music to the two deathly frightened women. Tobe and Jake ran out of the opposite door of the house and made for their horses and escaped into the darkness. The cottager walked on to the house, and amid sobs and hysterical laughs the two women told their story. The Cottager had known who these two women were ever since they moved in, but they did not know him, for they had only obtained a glimpse of him and, besides, his

beard was full-grown upon his face. Mrs. West and Ruth invited him in, but he hesitated; they told him they could not stay alone and he must help them. The frantic women were afraid of the very walls of the old lodge until the sun would rise once more and chase the night away. "Nestor" saw that the time had arrived when he could be of help; he would waive any rights of his own and meet the needs of this or any other hour. So he asked the ladies to come down to his cottage, away from the haunts of the big halls. To this they agreed. As they walked into the well-lighted little cottage, mother and daughter shouted in concert, "Mr. Blinkerman." He bowed and smiled, "Yes, but how did my pastor's wife and daughter see me through these whiskers?" "Your eyes and voice," said Mrs. West, "God bless you, Blinker; we have never needed you but that you were there." I imagine that in all the history of the manse a pastor's family was never made more comfortable and happy than Blinker made these two women that night.

Of course, sleep was not possible the rest of the night; even Ring was not permitted to sleep for Ruth's hugging him for the heroic part he played in their rescue. Considering what they had experienced, Mrs. West and Ruth were wonderfully composed, now that they were sheltered by a friend who

had never failed them. In addition to this, to see inside of that mystic cottage into which no adult outsider had ever looked was a distraction and an entertainment. As Ruth glanced from corner to corner of the little sitting room, her eye fell on a large photograph, which looked familiar. She hardly dared to express what she believed about that picture, yet she was confident that she knew. Half breathless she inquired, "Mr. Blinkerman, whose picture is that on the table?" Knowing the time had arrived that all must be known, Blinker replied: "That is my son, Roy Prince, who graduated a year ago from Princeton and has been this year at Columbia. He is now with his only aunt in New England." If all the stars had fallen at once, Ruth could not have been more surprised and dumbfounded. She could not speak and she was so overcome that her mother crossed the room and spoke to her as though she was calling her back from a wonderland in which she was evidently lost. "Mother," said Ruth, "am I dreaming? Is this a delirious sequel to that dreadful experience yonder in the lodge? If this is a real story, then God has sent it to us to help us forget the black-handed scheme of Tobe and Jake." "My child, this story is true," remarked Blinker, or "Nestor," "I have known of Roy's friendship with Alex and his love for you all along. He and I have understood

each other, but our lips were sealed until now." Ruth walked over to the table and reached out for the picture, but she almost drew back, the whole thing was so sacred and so mystic. But she did take the picture and holding it in her arms, asked Blinker to tell the whole story. Mrs. West even, was feeling the exciting power of the new tale. "Well," began Blinker, "let me first explain my presence here. Both of you have known me as a member of Dr. West's church ever since you came to Tarrytown. You will recall that I spoke very little of my affairs, considering that they would be of no interest to anyone. I have gone out and in from my business and no one has known much of me when I was off duty. Several years ago I found this place and it was so charming and restful I built this cottage and planted these flowers. I was about the first settler in this camp. Later, other buildings were erected, including the lodge you have just left. I saw and knew you the day you came, but I concluded that unless you needed me I would do as I have always done out here, I would keep to myself. The history of my life in Tarrytown you know as much of as anyone else, so we need not go into that, but to explain this picture of my boy, I will need to go back into the past. Some of it I have tried to forget myself. My original home was up in New England. When the Spanish-American War broke out

I went away from my wife and seven-year-old baby and joined the army. For many years before that, I was a drunkard, and broke my wife's heart. Though I really loved her, I was so weak I could not resist the call of whiskey. I regret for you good friends to know this, but somehow or other I believe it will help me in my loneliness to tell it. So I welcome the opportunity that seems to be forced upon me to make this confession. While in the army I met the Chaplain, a fine Christian man. His message reached my heart and I was really regenerated, and from that day to this I have never tasted liquor, a reformation I had tried to make so many times and failed. The Chaplain baptized me in a beautiful Florida lake and presented me with a certificate which gave me membership in Dr. West's church. Soon after my conversion, I secured a furlough and went back to my wife to tell her the good news, but I was too late for her to enjoy it long. She was so very ill when I reached her bedside that I could talk to her only a few moments at a time. I told her of my salvation and determination to serve God the rest of my life. When I told her she smiled and kissed my hand for a long time. I asked her forgiveness and she so freely granted it and said she would talk to me more about it over on the other side. She showed me her written will of her small estate which she had re-

ceived from her mother. By the terms of that will, all her property was given to Roy for his education, with the stipulation that he must live with his aunt and attend some good Eastern college, after he had finished high school. The morning before her death she was conscious and quite comfortable, and I asked her to add a codicil to her will and let me sign it too. We agreed that our little son Roy would take her name instead of mine until my worthiness was established or Roy's interest demanded otherwise. As my wife's name was Marianna Prince, our baby would be Roy Prince. The picture that you hold in your arms, Miss Ruth, is that boy. That is the reason he could not visit you and me in Tarrytown, that is the reason he knew the inwardness of the church unpleasantness and was always on our side of the question. He has spent many summers with me here and elsewhere. Many times I have prayed that God would call him into the ministry. I have loved preachers ever since the good Chaplain led me from the dark. I love my boy and if he ever enters the active ministry, I fear God will have a rival for my worship. His little estate is about all gone now, but I am in position to send him to school anywhere. No doubt you have often wondered about this disfiguring scar on my face. Of this, too, I am going to tell you, though you can never know the pain it brings to

my heart to let you know. Once before I left for the army, I was out on a drunken spree, with some Italians; a fight arose, and, but for the timely arrival of the police, I would have been killed. Before the officers arrived, one of the men cut me on the face; when I awoke next morning, I was in the charity ward of the hospital. There I lingered for weeks before my dear wife found me. I can see her now, frail and worn, carrying our little boy in her arms. She took me home and nursed me back to life, and I lived, but that was before I met God. Now that I have confessed all, I hope you will not hate me, and that my heart will feel better. You have the story as it is, and the circumstances that call it forth here, in the silent hours of early morning, while the rest of the world is asleep, are so tragic I feel that if the blackmailers meant those circumstances for ill, our Father has turned it all for good."

When Blinker was through with this true history, stranger and more romantic than fiction, the sun was rising over the big mountain far yonder to the east. Mrs. West and Ruth were not allowed to go back to the big house for breakfast; Blinker, who had learned to be a good cook, prepared breakfast and told them they must eat with him. All at once they realized that they were hungry. A hot, smoking meal, added to the bright morning, for which these

two women in the black night had longed and wondered if it would ever come, cheered their spirits, and after the blessing was said, Ruth simply remarked, "I have lived a lifetime in a day," and seemed to enjoy her morning meal.

CHAPTER XXVIII

"Rightly Reporting a Just Cause to the Unsatisfied"

TO correct an evil report is life's hardest task, but when undertaken with the conviction that right and justice are on one's side of the question, it can be done. The day following the vicious attempt of Tobe and Jake, two newspaper reporters were on the scene. The facts were given to them and they hurried away to the nearest telegraph station and gave the story to the Associated Press. In the meantime, Mrs. West had gotten Alex over long distance and asked him to find Dr. West and come at once, telling him enough of the general outlines of the occurrence of the night before to keep him from wild guessing as to the trouble. It so happened that Dr. West had lectured the night before just twenty miles out of Denver, at which place Alex had talked to him the previous day, so he knew exactly where to find him. He called his father and told him to be ready, in one hour, to go to Silver Poplar Camp. Alex, whose mind was as keen and active as that of a wizard, reasoning as to the importance of having the parents of these

would-be-defamers present at the meeting at the lodge, called Tobe's father and related the circumstances as he had obtained them from his mother, and asked him to bring the father of Jake and meet him at the earliest possible moment. Mr. Long was courteous although humiliated over the news, and told Alex that neither of the boys had been seen about home for days. After expressing his regret at hearing the awful story he promised Alex that both fathers would meet him at the earliest possible moment at Silver Poplar.

Soon Alex was in a high powered car going at full speed for his father, whom he found waiting with nervous impatience. The car stopped just long enough to take Dr. West in and they headed directly towards the lodge. By one o'clock they had crossed the mountain ridges and reached the camp. Mrs. West, Ruth, and Blinker, were walking in the front yard, and as cheerfully as they could, waved a greeting to them. Blinker turned to go to the back yard, when Ruth said, "No, Mr. Blinkerman, come with us; your presence will be as much a joy to me as a comfort to my father and brother." Blinker turned and walked toward the car, which had, by this time, fully stopped. The two women were at once in the arms of their beloved protectors. As fast as tongues could speak, the events of the night before were

related as the men stood too intently listening to even seek a seat. The terrible story was so overwhelming that neither man seemed to be interested in Blinker and his connection with the experience until Ruth came to that part in the narrative where Blinker, aroused by his dog Ring, rushed to the lodge, firing his pistol until the would-be character assassins were routed. They then found that their mysterious neighbor was their friend of all the years, Frederick Blinkerman. Turning to Alex, for she could wait no longer, Ruth said, "Brother, your roommate at Princeton, Roy Prince, is the son of Mr. Blinkerman. We found his picture in the cottage on the table, and his face shone right into ours when we retreated there last night for protection." Then she turned to her mother and asked her to vouch for the truth of so strange a statement. The discovery of this fact was a relieving feature to the men as it had been to Ruth and her mother the night before. Dr. West then asked all to come into the lodge where they could be seated and go over the details of the happenings and lay plans for the future. They all did go into the lodge, but this was the first time it had been entered by any one since they left it in a storm of fear at two o'clock that same morning. As soon as all were seated and sufficiently calm, Ruth told again the part Blinker played, and

told the story of Roy Prince just as Blinker had told it to them in the early hours of the dread morning. The listeners were almost breathless as the whole affair, including the finding of Blinker and Roy, was told. When Ruth was through, Alex turned to his mother and asked, "Mother, have any newspaper men been here?" One could easily see what he was thinking. Being an editor himself he knew how powerful for good or evil is the printed page. "Yes, two reporters were here early this morning," replied his mother. It was not difficult to see the pained expression on Alex's face. He knew what would cover the country in the morning papers. "This will be a headliner in the papers tomorrow," said Alex, "but if it is not correctly reported our task will be to report it right to the unsatisfied."

Just then a big touring car halted at the gate of the lodge. Dr. West and Alex walked out to meet the two strangers who were approaching the house. The men spoke almost simultaneously. "Our names are Jacob and John Long, and we came at the call of young West from Denver." Alex stepped in front of his father, saying, "I am young West; I wanted you here at this time." Both men extended their hands in a most cordial way. Alex shook hands with each of them. Then he presented his father and the men greeted each other in a dignified and respectful

manner. The man who acted as spokesman, began, "Gentlemen, we are too humiliated and prostrated to appear in your presence, but we have come to say and do whatever we can to help right this unmentionable wrong on the part of our sons. All we know of the heart-breaking incident is what young West told us over long distance from Denver this morning. What he told us is bad enough, but God knows we hope it is no worse." When he had thus spoken, Dr. West invited them into the lodge. "No," said the other brother, " we are not yet able to face the ladies whom our sons attempted to slander. May we not talk to you men a little further so that you may know our feelings about the matter before we talk to them or even appear in their presence." To this request the Wests assented. After about fifteen minutes of conversation, Dr. West assured the strangers that they would be welcome to come into the house. This time they agreed, and at once they were presented to Mrs. West and Ruth. The ladies received the men graciously, and without delay the Longs assured them both that the act of their sons did not find any sympathy whatever in their hearts. "These boys have been a lifelong grief to us," said one of them. "Their mothers are prostrated at home because of their waywardness, and now the climax has been reached in this unthinkable attempt. We have not

seen them for days. We tried to send them to school, offering them every advantage that money could buy, but they defaulted in that, as they have in everything else. Mrs. West and Miss Ruth, the mothers of these boys join us in begging for forgiveness, not to the boys, but to us, their parents, who condemn their insult to you as much as you do. We see our mistake and take our share of the blame for all of their deplorable conduct. Over-indulgence, too liberal allowance, misguided parental love, added to the destructive philosophy of some leaders in this state, have conspired to their downfall. Many times we have wished that we were back in our Eastern homes, with our children about us in poverty but in the church, rather than out here in what the world calls wealth, but disgraced by our sons, who are possibly fugitives across the Mexican border. We cannot and will not defend them again. We are here to offer our aid in any way that you will accept it."

All they said was so evidently sincere that the wronged family could not do otherwise than accept it and treat them kindly. Already the sheriff and other officers had been notified and were in search of the boys, and what more could the family ask, was the sentiment expressed by Dr. West. Alex noticing that his mother and sister were in tears, added, "Gentlemen, your visit has done one thing for me. It has

taken murder out of my heart. In my room in Denver, I swore that I would never work another day until I crashed leaden death into these men's hearts. I knew that they had forfeited their protection of law by this cowardly deed. But now I see your distress also and I say to you that I leave this case in the hands of the authorities of this state." Up to this point neither of the ladies had spoken, but now Mrs. West, choking back her sobs, said, "I know a mother's love and I am thinking of the two mothers who sit yonder in their sack cloth and ashes; furthermore we, of this lodge, dwell in a Manse; we have preached forgiveness and love all of our lives and my children and their noble father have lived in the atmosphere of Him who was wronged and said 'Father forgive them.' I have learned the lessons of that prayer and our Manse has been His home for all these years, so gentlemen, go back to your wives, bearing to them the love of another mother, whose suffering has been intense but of a different kind, for in it all, I have found Him sufficient." The spell that swept over the little company, after these noble words, cannot be described. But the occasion reached its climax when Ruth walked over to the piano, and when she had found the chord sang:

"If I were hanged on the highest hill,
Mother o' Mine,
I know whose love would follow me still,
Mother o' Mine.

If I were drowned in the deepest sea,
Mother o' Mine,
I know whose tears would come down to me,
Mother o' Mine.

If I were damned by body and soul,
Mother o' Mine,
I know whose prayers would make me whole,
Mother o' Mine.
Oh! Mother o' Mine."

Darkness was settling over the hills and the visitors were about to depart, when Blinker, who had been silently listening to all the conversation quietly spoke: "My suggestion is that these men spend the night here and let us all see what is in the morning paper. The Denver paper will get here at ten o'clock. We may then need to counsel and work together. I share the forgiveness, for I have learned this from the Manse Dwellers, but we must right a wrong as well as forgive. Both are Christian acts." The strangers were evidently surprised at this new personality, and Dr. West seeing this said: "Gentlemen, this is Mr. Blinkerman, our neighbor in the

cottage below, who, by his timely intervention last night, proved himself a friend to all concerned." The introduction was acknowledged by all three of the men. To Blinkerman's suggestion both visitors readily consented, and this plan was apparently satisfactory to all. The men had a friend, a fellow ranchman, a few miles away, and they said they would go and spend the night with him and come back in the morning. They bade the company good-night and went their way. Next morning the rich ranchmen were back, according to agreement, and all anxiously awaited the arrival of the bus bearing the morning paper from Denver. When it finally arrived several papers were purchased and then were the misleading, deadly and damning head lines:

Preacher's Daughter and Young Ranchman Compromised

They spent most of the night alone in a fashionable lodge, but were interrupted by the bark of a dog. However, it is known that it is a forcible attempt to "blackmail" on the part of a profligate youth, who was drunk at the time, and his whiskey might have led to worse crimes.

Then the rest of the story gave the names of the parties involved. The facts did not warrant the head lines but they would naturally leave the public in doubt. "Now for action," said the ever ready, prac-

tical Blinker, "All I want of you men, is a written statement of what you said last evening and I will do the rest." This the men gladly and quickly prepared, and as they handed it to Blinker, added, "Anything else you need, command us." They offered him money, but he refused, quickly adding, "At this time, I want manhood and not money." Blinker wrote two telegrams as follows:

Roy Prince, New England: Ignore Associated Press reports as to Preacher's Daughter and Young Ranchman. Meet me in Tarrytown first train. All identity has been disclosed. You will approve. Trust me. Leave in one hour.
R. Frederick Blinkerman.

Again:

Wentworth Stone, Tarrytown: Ask church and public to suspend judgment on Associated Press reports from "Silver Poplar Lodge." On my way home with facts. Have church out in full force at prayer meeting and I will make you fully satisfied.

R. Frederick Blinkerman.

Up in New England a young man was soon making ready to leave for Tarrytown and was glad for almost anything that would remove the barrier that had kept him away from the home town of the girl he loved. In the crowded diner, next morning there was sitting at his table a young woman who had a bold brazen face. Her conduct was fair enough except that she displayed a rather daring attitude

toward waiters, conductors and everyone else. Roy had no special interest in her except to study, at a distance, her type. Just as the breakfast was being served, the front wheels of the engine left the track, causing quite a wreck but no cars were derailed and nobody hurt. The worst inconvenience was a few hours delay of the train. This accident broke up all formalities and the passengers felt at liberty to talk to each other. The young woman apologized for not having a card with her but said, "I am Dolly Harteman; I am a business woman and for years have been the letter clerk in the Tarrytown Postoffice. I see on the flyleaf of your book that you are Roy Prince from Columbia University. I have often handled your letters to and from Miss West, and know the writing of both of you." Then she smiled in such a suggestive way that Roy was sorry he was seated at her table. "By the way," said Miss Harteman, "I notice Miss West had a scene out in Colorado the other night," she laughed in apparent delight. Like a flash, Roy came back saying, "But by no fault of her own. Here is a telegram from my father, calling me to meet him at once. Then he drew from his pocket the message and handed it to Miss Harteman, who eagerly read it and the signature, "Frederick Blinkerman." "You do not mean to tell me that this man is your father," said Miss Harteman,

the grin on her face fading into a troubled shadow. As soon as the evening meal was over, Roy went into his berth, relieved to escape from a woman who, if nothing else was wrong with her, lacked the right spirit. Not until he reached Tarrytown and talked with his father did Roy know the significance of the deep disappointment that swept the face of Miss Harteman when she learned the relationship between Blinkerman and Roy. As soon as young Prince had the opportunity, weightier matters being settled, he told his father of his experience with the young woman who had alighted from the same train and watched Roy and his father embrace. Then Blinker told Roy of an experience with this mail clerk when he was handling a complaint made by his business firm against the Postoffice for intercepting their mail. The charge was traced to Miss Harteman, but for lack of technical proof the matter had to be dismissed. Young Prince and Blinkerman talked constantly of the affair that had called them together in Tarrytown, their concern being to set things in their right light before the church, community and the world.

It was Wednesday, the night Blinker was to appear before the church and explain all. The great building was crowded to the door when the hour arrived. It was a friendly audience, only two or

three of the old grudge-holders being present. Naturally there were several newspaper reporters in the audience. Blinker was a shy, timid man, but when duty called him, he would perform it in the face of shot or shell. He began by telling the church that Dr. West could not come, as his presence was demanded with his wife, as the recent shock had added to her frailty, and thus prevented her making the journey home at this time. As he talked, the reporters were evidently getting it word for word. Breathless silence took possession of the entire audience as he gave them a description of these two young men, half drunk, ordering the women to separate rooms at midnight, later on the crash of the dishes arousing his dog and he rushing from his nearby cottage firing his pistol. He told them of how he saw the two young men run for their horses and escape into the darkness; followed next day by officers of the law. He then read the written statement of the two fathers and told how Mrs. West sent back love messages to the mothers of the boys. The great audience sobbed aloud when they saw again the shining Christianity of her who had adorned their Manse these years. But happily the distress of the great congregation was relieved by the touch of romance which Blinker reserved for the last. He told the story of the photograph of his

son which Ruth found on his table as she and her mother came into his cottage early in the morning. He, then, repeated in brief outline the story of his own mysterious life, and knowing the heart relationship between these two dear young people for years he had wired Roy to meet him here for this occasion and report their own cause to the world at the same time that he might rightly report the just cause of the Wests to the unsatisfied. Then he asked Roy to stand, and pointing to him, Blinker said: "This is Roy Prince Blinkerman, who up to this time has been known as Roy Prince." At which, young Prince exclaimed: "I am glad to bear the name of such a father."

At that moment the audience went wild and Blinker saw that the work was done and the meeting need continue no further. He shouted, "In God's name you are dismissed." The reporters slipped out the back door but many of the audience remained until midnight. The wires of the Associated Press clicked and clicked while the world "waited for the sunrise." Next morning the streets of Tarrytown were alive with anxious seekers for the paper. In common with their fellow-citizens the nation over, they saw another head line: "All Set Right." "Blinkerman, the Man of the Hour." Then followed the full text of the statement giving details and

names, including the written statement of the senior Longs. But that was not all. There was another head line in the adjoining column dated from Roswell, New Mexico. "Two Young Men Die in Turn Turtle." "Chased by officers, young Tobe and Jake Long lost control of their car and ran into a deep ditch pinning them under its weight. They were dead when the officers arrived. They were wanted for a personal blackmailing crime."

It was yet a month before vacation was over so Blinker and Roy went back to the little cottage at Silver Poplar near by the big lodge where Dr. and Mrs. West and Ruth were waiting. It was a happy hour when these two men arrived. There was not much to tell as the papers of the country had carried all the news, but there was much to rejoice over.

YOUTH IN GOD'S MOUNTAINS

"Ruth and Roy would stroll far away into the mellowing hills where love found a perfect ally"

CHAPTER XXIX

Love and War

DURING the next thirty days following the return of Blinker and Roy to Silver Poplar, the sunshine of love and the clouds of war formed by turns a clear and a hazy sky for Ruth and Roy. It was during this month that these two fine young people had an opportunity to find their own souls as well as the souls of each other. Those perfect summer days found Dr. and Mrs. West enjoying a rest and fellowship without interference, even by work. Blinker was also radiant with the joy that Roy and the Wests brought to him. In the afternoons he would sit in the big lodge with his pastor and Mrs. West, while Ruth and Roy would stroll far away into the foothills. At each sunset, all of them could truly say, "This is the end of a perfect day." If ever love found a perfect ally, it was in the setting of that month, in those wonderful hills. The clear, sunny days, the silver moon, mellowing the mountains into the softness of scenic poetry, the singing of the birds and the flowers presided over by the golden rods, had

their effect on all hearts. It had been many years since Dr. and Mrs. West had been so relieved of care. They even felt the joy of sentiment, so long held back by days of suffering and toil. To the young people the situation was nothing short of an angelic arrangement. What finer thing is there on this earth, than care-free youth? When noble natural love is added, you have the best this life can give. Roy and Ruth liked the same books, the same sports, in fact, their tastes, in nearly everything ran parallel. Somebody has advocated the "Law of Opposites" in matrimonial planning. *Never.* These young graduates were facing life and looking at it from the same viewpoint.

"Ruth," Roy said, addressing her in the most serious moment that had ever confronted him, "I hope you do not grow weary at my pouring out my soul's affection for you. It is a real satisfaction for me to tell you that I love you even if it is not returned. Up to this time, in my life, the greatest honor I have had is the unwavering and fixed love which I bear to you. My love is based on everything that ever makes true love. Entering into the love-storm that always rages in my heart is the calm judgment of my mind that you are the most worthy woman for my affection whom I have ever known. You complete my life. In you I find a compensation

for all that I have missed. The days in these wonderful mountains are now about ended. Before we break camp you must know for once and for all that I believe God made you for me. From the first days at Princeton my guardian angel has been you. Now that my path turns into unknown directions I want you to promise me that you will marry me. I know I am asking a woman her best when I ask her hand in marriage, but, Ruth, I promise you my best also, as poor as that best is." It is a wonderful thing for a young woman to know that when a proposal for marriage is made, it is made by a man who is sincere, honest and on the square. Ruth need not be alarmed by any motive, on the part of Roy, other than by that love which one man bears toward one woman in this request for marriage. With all this in the girl's mind, she must be and wanted to be just as fair as he had been. In her reply her fine noble soul must meet the noble heart of the man who addressed her. She was not conscious of as deep love for Roy as he had expressed to her. She could only say, "Roy, I am just out of school and my mother and father have lived for this day. My brother has gone out upon his career, so I must be with my dear parents for awhile. All of our association has been, to me, a radiant joy. I do love you, Roy, and these days up here in this beautiful world,

have been richer and better than any days of my life. They would not have been nearly so rich and wonderful without you, Roy. As dear as the price I had to pay to get you up here with us, it has been worth it." "Wait a minute," said Roy, "I must add another statement before you finally answer my question. When you have known all, you will be in a better position to answer. I do not mean for you to leave home at once, Ruth. You are aware of this great world war that is raging through the nations. Another call for soldiers has been made and I must go, I can wait no longer. Of course, I could plead my exemption, if I would declare what is really in my heart, that I am a ministerial student, but I do not want that exemption. I am going. I would not be worthy to love you if I should draw back from my duty as God has given me to see it. I am going back to Tarrytown with my father, his home is mine now, and in the recruiting office there, I will join the army of my country. If we were to marry before I go away, you could stay at home until I come back, if ever I do. Furthermore, if it suits you better I will place the engagement ring on your finger and some day I will come back for you." All this did make a difference. Ruth began to realize now that it was not a lack of love that troubled her, but the fixing of dates. "But suppose you never come back," said

Ruth. "Oh, I am so distressed," she declared. "I cannot blame you, Roy, for doing your part in this awful war. My heart breaks at the thought of your leaving me, even for a minute, but how could I honor and love a slacker? Another sacrifice on my part may be needed to aid me in being what I really want to be. But, Roy, I am coming to see that I love you more than I thought. Your manly patriotism, your absence from me and all that goes with this cruel war, serve to show my heart where it belongs."

About that time the call was made for the evening meal, as the Blinkers were to dine with the Wests in the lodge. At the table the conversation was jolly and full of good feeling and good cheer. That evening, they discussed the plans and the time of breaking camp. Soon all of them must be back at their work. The quiet, secure month had done wonders for Mrs. West. She felt that she was better than she had been for years. All had observed the complete fellowship between the two young people throughout the month. Therefore, no one was surprised at the announcement that was made the following evening. The next day Ruth and Roy reached their definite conclusion. They decided to announce their engagement to be consummated in marriage after Roy had returned from the war.

They also agreed to tell their parents that evening, and ask for their approval and blessing.

When they all gathered in the big living room, the young people told the three others of their plans and wishes. None of the parents had any real reason for objecting though, like other fathers and mothers, the announcement had come too soon for them. In each mind there would come, unbidden, the thought, "Would Roy ever come back?" Like all other girls Ruth soon gave herself to thinking of how fine Roy would look in the uniform and in this vision of him her admiration grew greater. Every phase of the engagement was discussed, even to the kind of wedding they would have, after the war was over.

Two days later they entrained for Tarrytown and arrived to find that the church had made preparation to receive their pastor and his wife in a worthy fashion. Hundreds were at the train, a serenade in the early evening on the lawn of the Manse yard and a great congregation for Sunday service made this good pastor and his wife very happy. Roy had been tacitly accepted as a member of the West family, so he made himself at home in the Manse, going and coming as he wished, but spending his nights with his father. He was making many acquaintances in Tarrytown since he had come.

Soon he went down to the recruiting office building

and filled out his papers. Ten days later, he was ordered to a training camp. It was known that only three months would be spent in this particular camp and then they would go across. The special train to carry these newly enlisted boys to camp was to leave at five o'clock in the afternoon. Ruth dreaded the hour and looked upon it with a lover's fear. She must go to the train, and asked her mother to go with her. At the station a great crowd had gathered to bid good-bye to these fine fellows. It was purely a gamble as to which one, if any, would ever come back. As the conductor ordered all on board, Roy put his great arms about this beautiful, refined, self-sacrificing child of the Manse and kissed her while love of country and love of sweethearts fought a battle that was never finished.

CHAPTER XXX

Love on a Rough Sea

THE three months' intensive training in the camp were over and Roy's company had been ordered overseas for active service. Letters which had been coming to Ruth urged her to come to the port of embarkation. She talked it over with her father and mother and it was agreed that her mother would go with her, and at the appointed time they were at the port. The old transport lifted anchor as the mid-day bells of the city rang out. Ruth stood on shore and waved her farewell to the man to whom she had given her heart. Blinker, too, was there to bid adieu to his son. It was hard to tell whether Ruth or Blinker was more deeply moved as the boat faded into the unseen. Mrs. West, Ruth and Blinker took the night train for home. Realizing that they were not the only lonely hearts on this side, they tried to find comfort for themselves that, in turn, they might brighten the lives of others who were in similar distress. If comparison could be made at all, Blinker was the more to be pitied. He was all alone. Roy had lived with him only a few

months before his departure, but this had been so novel, and had brought to Blinker that little home touch that had not been his for nearly twenty years. On the other hand, a woman's love, like that which Ruth bore to Roy, was heaven's touch to a maiden's heart. Waiting in suspense, what a silent tragedy to a human soul! Ruth's confiding trust in her mother, added to that almost superhuman patience which always characterized her life, was her stay. She found solace in the service which she was rendering to her mother, for she had taken over nearly all of the responsibility of the household. In addition she helped her father by driving his car while he made his calls. She was a girl with two chambers in her heart; with one she loved her mother best, and with the other she loved her father best.

Three weeks had passed and one morning, the postman handed Ruth a letter from the American Expedition Forces. This was the first word that had come to her since the old transport had moved out of port. Ruth could now see the rift in the clouds. Getting letters from Roy was going to be her sustaining agency. On this hope and expectation she placed her reliance during these endless days of longing. But this hope was soon to fade. Besides the one short letter, which Roy wrote on his arrival she never received another. Long weary

weeks dragged themselves into longer months and no word. Let it be known that Ruth was not the only disappointed heart. Roy watched the mail every day for six months without receiving one word from Ruth. Neither of these young people could understand. Ruth would say, "Have I been mistaken in Roy?" He would wonder if Ruth had forgotten so soon. Deep disappointment was being supplanted by slight bitterness and resentment on the part of both. Roy's company was ordered into a fighting sector. One week later his name was given in the American newspaper lists as one of many others who had been killed in battle. When his name came under the eye of Ruth she would not be comforted. She said, "Mother, if Roy had been true to his promise to me, the grief of his death would not be so overpowering. If he had died just as I believed he would, with a true heart, I could then call mine a 'sacred sorrow,' but to play me false and go out with double dealing in his soul is a humiliation as well as an uncontrollable sorrow." To this fine piece of reasoning Mrs. West could not reply.

Over on the other side there was another heart growing resentful. Not one letter from Ruth had ever reached him. He had given himself to his country, which country he loved better because Ruth lived in it, and now she would not even write him a note of

appreciation, even if she did not care to say what he had a right to expect. The actual truth was that Roy had received a serious wound in his left shoulder which ranged near his heart. When the rescue squad picked him up they counted him as dead, and that is the reason his name was listed as one who had fallen in battle. He was taken to a hospital near London, and for six months he was slowly coming back to health and service. Silence on both sides of the sea for more than a year dissolved the engagement in both minds. Ruth thought Roy was dead and he wished that he were.

Back in Tarrytown there was a young man by the name of Bynum Sangster, a very successful realtor. He had come to the city since Ruth went to college. He was a member of Dr. West's church, and had proven himself a high class citizen with an honorable standing among all. His manners were good and his general bearing was one which commended him to the most exacting. He was a man of religious conviction and in him Dr. West had a good friend and supporter. He was not presuming nor forward, but just dependable. On several occasions he had met Ruth and they found much in common. He had been informed of the relation which had existed between Ruth and Roy, he had also heard something of the misunderstanding which had arisen and then later

of his reported death in battle. Bynum Sangster had been refused entrance into the army on account of a lame foot caused when his favorite saddle horse fell on him when he was a boy. Young Sangster asked the privilege of calling on Ruth. She welcomed him and soon they had become good friends. Within a few months they were engaged to be married, but no time was set.

Exactly twenty months after Roy had boarded the transport, he alighted from the "Old Dominion Limited" at the Tarrytown station. The whole city was shocked as the news spread through the papers and otherwise, that this man reported dead, and not heard from for more than eighteen months, had come back to Tarrytown, to his father and to his friends. The report of his death was based upon his apparently dying condition when wounded. His long tedious hospital wait and absence of letters to relatives and friends fixed his death as a fact in the minds of all. Never was a girl placed in so awkward a position as was Ruth. Reason and struggle as she would, the way seemed more and more difficult. It seemed to her that in this dilemma she must decide what was right, even if it meant the ignoring the heart's desire. To be fair and just at this time seemed to be the only guide. The head must dictate to the heart. She had about

decided what was right, when new light was discovered and all was thrown into confusion once more. It was Ruth's custom to bring all of her problems to her mother. Here is a case in which only the principal can act. She must handle the most delicate and tangled threads alone. There was no time to lose, as all must be decided almost in a day. Bynum still claimed her promise of marriage, but Roy she had not seen and did not expect to see. Feeling that Roy had not supported his profession of love he had forfeited his rights to her heart, she had consented to the announcement of her engagement to Bynum Sangster. Roy heard of this and was preparing to depart from Tarrytown, never to return. He wrote a note to Ruth informing her of his intention, but asked for the privilege of a ten-minute interview before he left. Ruth could not refuse so simple a request, as the spirit he was showing was so commendable and fair. She answered the note and granted his request. Within one hour, Roy stood once more at the door of the Manse. It would take tongues of angels to describe the emotions of his soul at that moment. In a few minutes he and Ruth were face to face in the parlor, with Mrs. West a silent listener. "Ruth," said Roy, "if you had only answered my many letters and told me of your change of heart, and let all this come to me in a grad-

ual way, I could have borne it with more ease. I asked for this ten minutes with you, just that I might look on your face and carry the picture with me in the peaceful pursuits of my ministry, as I carried the same picture into the horrors of war. I utter no blame, for I could hold none toward you."

"But, Oh Roy, I did write to you. You are the one who, like many another soldier, forgot when you were away from home, then that cruel report of your death came." Ruth swooned and fell toward her mother, who put out her arms, and held her as she cried for the rest of the ten minutes. Looking at his watch, Roy said, "Goodbye, my dear friends, my ten minutes are gone." "No, no, just tell me, Roy, if you received any of my letters," cried Ruth. "Not one, Ruth, after I left the training camp, and that you may know that I did as I have said, here are two of my letters that found their way back to me in the great lonely hospital, marked "Returned Unopened." This forced upon me the conclusion that you had received the others and did not care to answer them." It was easy to see that whoever had written upon these returned letters had successfully imitated Ruth's writing. What could have happened to this correspondence? That was the question now calling for a reply. Ruth knew that she had done her part, and now she had the proof that Roy had done his.

All doubt passed out of Roy's mind when Mrs. West added her testimony to Ruth's loyalty, by saying, "Roy, my darling daughter wrote letter after letter thinking she would find you in one camp or another over in France. I now see that this has come about at the hand of some evil person. That same evil spirit or some other explains why letters between you and your father never reached their destination. What could be more unfortunate, what are we to do?" It was a dark hour. "Mrs. West," replied Roy, "I am going to make the sacrifice and settle it for Ruth's sake. I love her too deeply to cause her any added pain. Tonight I leave and I ask you to count me among those who died on the battlefield. I ask only one other favor. Count this visit only as a dream. A phantom that came and passed. When I am settled in my new home, father is coming to live with me. Since our lives have tasted the sweets of the renewed relationship, he and I can never live apart." In a moment Roy was out of the door and had disappeared from sight. Could it be forever?

The wedding of Ruth and Byrum was to take place within two weeks and the only change to be made was that it would be a quiet home wedding instead of in the church. As preparations were made, Ruth grew more burdened and heavy hearted. Bynum would often ask her why she could not enter

into the approaching happy occasion with more of that gladness which was sweeping through his soul. She would struggle to be in a happy mood and at times would succeed. One night, as Ruth was alone in her room, she talked with God, for in all her life she had been close to Him. She told the Lord that she was in His hands. She could not direct her own destiny. She had no petition to make, no prayer to offer, she only had a commitment of her life and affairs to Him. She was willing without a murmur, to leave it all to His great good plans. God did have his plans. Two days later when Bynum was coming in from the country, where he had been appraising a farm for a client, he was driving his favorite roadster. Within three miles of the city the road made a sharp turn and losing control of his car he collided with an oak tree. When the rescuers found him he was dead and Ruth's already overburdened heart had another test.

CHAPTER XXXI

Cupid Mounts Above the Storm

IT will be remembered that in the tangled threads in the skein of her life, Ruth had prayed for no special nor particular thing. She had committed it all to God, telling Him that to His will she submitted and by His solution she would abide. This was the Christian philosophy of her life hitherto, and by this faith she meant to go on through either storm or sunshine. In the coming of these recent and strange Providences, Ruth would have been crushed beyond recovery, had she been a woman without Christ. Even though her suffering was caused by another, it was just as real as though it had been caused by her own mistake. Yes, sin is the source of all pain, and the effect is just as blighting when it is the sin of another, as it is when it is our own. Notwithstanding, Ruth was walking in the fiery furnace, she believed that the God of her fathers would not even permit the smell of fire upon her garments. In this trust she must live if she lived at all.

Three days after Bynum's funeral, the postman

brought a letter to the Manse, which though written by the hand of a woman must have been of the divine plan. The letter was for Ruth and was as follows:

"Los Angeles, Calif.

"Miss Ruth West,

"Tarrytown.

"My dear Miss West:

"You will be surprised, even shocked at the contents of this letter. I do not know why I am writing it, I only know that I am. I cannot but conclude that some outside influence is moving upon me to do it and if that is true, I have no fear. Whether you need this letter or not is none of my concern. I only know that I must write it.

"Your beautiful life provoked my jealousy and envy, as I compared it with my own, so vicious and unworthy. But be assured that your same beautiful life is now my only human inspiration to goodness for the remaining days.

"My confession to you is that I intercepted all your letters to Mr. Prince and his to you. I had been clerk in Tarrytown Postoffice so long, I knew well how to do this awful thing. I read every letter and then destroyed them, except two from him. Even these I opened and read, then resealed and imitating your writing I wrote 'Returned Unopened.'

As I treated the correspondence between Roy and his father the same way, I was the only human being who knew the wounded soldier was still alive. Bynum Sangster had the guilty knowledge of what I was doing and was glad. He furnished the money for my escape. This information will doubtless help you out of the trouble into which I have heartlessly plunged you. This is the best I can do now.

"I am leaving this place tomorrow and when this letter reaches you I will be more than a thousand miles away. I hope the officers will never find me.

"I am a broken and exiled woman.

"Dolly Harteman."

During the reading of this letter there were times when it seemed that Ruth's heart would cease to beat, yet, she made no outward cry or demonstration. Hurrying to her mother with the letter they both read it again and again. It was a case in which nothing could be done. The Wests had learned to trust and be still. So many times in their career, this was all that could be done. The growth of Ruth's Christian graces had been so marked that she no longer needed instruction. She had met another crisis and she could be trusted in this one, just as she had triumphed in others. Again Doctor, Mrs. West and Ruth looked up for light.

As Blinker was vitally concerned in this new de-

velopment, the Manse dwellers asked him to come to their home that evening. On his arrival they showed him the letter. After he had read it, they all talked over the crime, the seriousness and tragedy of such a deed as the one perpetrated by this postoffice clerk. No one mentioned any possible turn of affairs which might be caused by this revelation. But as the course of human events moves to its destiny in the light of truth, they all determined that those concerned must know the facts. It was, therefore, agreed that Roy should know all. Not a one in this conference in the Manse that night was at liberty to inform him except his father, so delicate were the conditions involved. This Blinker saw for himself, without a single spoken word on the part of the others, besides he was the only one who knew where Roy was at this time. Once more this man of destiny, was to be "the man of the hour." Turning to Ruth, Blinker said, "Will you let me have this letter for a few days. I guarantee its safe return to you." On the part of the Wests there was no discounting Blinker in anything. So without hesitation she handed him the letter. Blinker then turned to Dr. West and said, "Pastor, I will not be at church next Sunday; however, I will see you before many days have passed. Good-bye." Quickly, Blinker left the Manse and they saw him no more for a week which

passed on slow wings, but they were wings of healing.

Up in New England, Blinker found his son, and all that passed between them has never been told, but enough is known to make right a great wrong. He told Roy of the trustful attitude of Ruth, showed him the letter from Miss Harteman and gave him the advice of a father whose name Roy was now glad to bear. "Father," said Roy, "I am sure that the love which began years ago between Ruth and me was fine and true. In crossing life's ocean it certainly has encountered a rough sea. In the struggle it has been battered, but I am slowly coming to see that if there is anything better than love, it is wounded love. The reason my own faith is still firm is because it is of the type I learned from Ruth. I have seen her when the stubborn, adverse winds have blown against her, and she stood erect, never yielding to the gale. I have seen her when designing foes have assailed her, but she never 'dipped her colors.' The faith she inspired in me is not the kind that dies like the primrose in spring. Humanly speaking this is the power that enabled me to cross this great disappointment, and set my face toward fulfilling my call to the ministry. I tell you this that you may know that I still mean to spend one more year in Theological study, to preach the gospel of the God whom

Ruth once served, and whom I now see, she still serves. I change in only one thing. I said I would never enter Tarrytown again, but I am going back with you. The day is breaking and maybe there will be a morning."

What Blinker liked was that Roy was finding his own course without much urging on his part. He wanted the young man to act on his own volition in the light of the facts.

On the train that bore the Blinkers back to Tarrytown they talked in that good confidence which makes a father and his son safe and happy. One of the main topics upon which they spoke was of his remaining year in the Seminary and then his active ministry. No subject could have been more delightful to the older man. Roy related how he believed that his full course at Princeton, his one year of Bible work at Columbia and still another year in a real Seminary would give him full educational qualifications for his work. After that was over, Roy told how he hoped he could obtain a church to which he could minister with, at least, some of the success that had attended Dr. West. Arriving in Tarrytown late Saturday night, the first chance Ruth and Roy had to see each other was next morning at church. The first thing he said to her was, "Ruth, I want you to know that I am glad to see you." "Yes,

Roy," replied Ruth, "to see each other is our right and privilege." Could any words have been more frank and Christian than these two statements? What else was said that morning is not to be recorded.

Three months had to pass yet before Roy's Seminary opened. During this time the association of Roy and Ruth was not of the fulsome, offensive kind but in just such a way as good taste and a critical public would approve. They used these three months just as the parched flowers on the banks of the crystal stream would use the passing waters to slake their thirst—and bring back their fading life. Fall had come, and tomorrow Roy was to leave for the Seminary. The previous evening found him in the Manse. The hour for leaving Ruth was at hand. He had left her before, but no such delicate or carefully measured words were used as now. "Ruth," said Roy, "you once wore my ring; the day came when you had to take it off. May I now place it back on your finger?" Ruth replied not a word, but mutely walked to the adjoining room and when she returned she handed him the ring. As he placed it on her finger, he said, "It has taken all of this tragic history to prove beyond the shadow of doubt that the circle of a true lover's ring has no ending."

At Christmas time Roy came home, and following

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the Sunday morning service on the twenty-fifth of December, Ruth and Roy appeared at the altar, where Dr. James West solemnized the marriage, and gave them a father's blessing. Ruth went back with Roy for the rest of the session. At the close of school they came home, and enjoyed a month in the Manse with Dr. and Mrs. West. Roy was soon called to the pastorate of the church at Highlands, a beautiful little city just forty miles from Tarrytown, where he successfully labored for twelve months.

CHAPTER XXXII

A Manse Without a Church

ROY and Ruth had been at Highlands about one month when Dr. West had his first serious sickness since his attack of pneumonia when he first came to Tarrytown, nearly twenty years before. This time it was a mild paralytic stroke. He was not an old man, but, measured by the standard of hard work and achievements, one must recognize the approach of enforced retirement. Expert physicians pronounced his case serious, but not immediately dangerous. They advised three months rest, believing this would bring him back to health and work. Dr. and Mrs. West sought the beaches of Florida, where they played and rested. At the end of three months he returned to his church apparently well. With hope and gratitude, the pastor resumed his regular work, but Providence had evidently decreed differently. A second and more serious attack soon came. He told Mrs. West and his church that he was not longer able to carry on the work, and that his days were numbered. Within a few weeks he was greatly improved and the church

insisted that he go away for another rest and come back to them. But his course had been selected, and it was in another direction. He wrote out his resignation, intending to send it to the church to be read. But now that he was growing stronger, he decided to hold it until a Sunday morning in the near future and present it in person, bid his church good-bye, and pronounce a blessing upon his spiritual children. Soon that Sunday came. Dr. West was able to preach a short sermon, followed by the reading of his resignation. The paper was short, simple and profoundly beautiful. He insisted upon the church accepting it, and since there was nothing else to do, they did as he urged. Big, brave men sobbed and cried as they saw this godly, but now broken man, retire from his place of leadership, which he had so wonderfully filled and adorned these years. Who could ever stand in his place and do his work? If ever a shepherd had given his life for the sheep, this under-shepherd had done it; old, young, children, saint and sinner would ask, "Shall we ever see his like again?" After the service, Deacon Stone tenderly aided the pastor to a limousine placed at the side door, and he had a comfortable trip back to the manse. He stood the ordeal far better than Mrs. West did. With the burdens off, both seemed lighter in heart, and improvement was marked. Knowing

the manse would soon be needed for his successor, Dr. and Mrs. West rented an attractive but inexpensive little house several miles from the church and moved into it. Some of their furniture they left in the big house, since the little one would not hold it. They knew that when it became necessary, they could get this extra furniture out of the way. Considering everything, the retired minister and his wife were exceedingly happy. They did not know why this was true, but surely a loving Heavenly Father was "tempering the winds to the shorn lamb." Be all that as it may, I ask you to observe the deep pathos of this scene. Once a powerful preacher, a wise counsellor, and a well-provided-for preacher, but now, yonder, he rests in a little rented house, without health, in the shadow of approaching age and without money to buy bread. Multiply him by thousands and you have a picture of the retired manse-dwellers of this land.

A committee of three from the headquarters of the "Veteran's Reward" visited Dr. West and offered him a gift from the fund, the gathering of which he was the original inspiration. It so happened that when the committee arrived at the little house, a large company from the church was there giving Dr. and Mrs. West a surprise and donation party. This gave the committee its chance to time their donation with the others. One member of the commitee seized his

opportunity to make the presentation speech. To this generous offer, Dr. West, after being aided to his feet, said, in part, as follows: "Brethren, it is good of you and your board to send me this wonderful token of your love and appreciation. Bear back to your office my unspeakable happiness which you have brought me. But I cannot accept it. In my campaign, I told the people that none of this money would ever come to me. Though I have needed help even earlier than I thought, I must get it elsewhere. I cannot play false to my statement. You will find many notable preachers sitting on the brink of the grave crying for bread. Go to them before it is too late. I have no hesitancy in accepting what my church children have brought me. This is their fund and no promise is violated. Once again, my good friends, I hold in my hand a telegram from my son, Alex, bearing the good news that he has just been made chief editor of the "Golden Gate Review" at a salary of fifteen thousand dollars a year. He tells me I shall never want. God bless you, my children, good-night." As Dr. West uttered his last words, he feebly turned from the front porch of the little house and went into his room. Everybody knew he must have rest and all left.

The First Church of Tarrytown knew it was time to seek a new pastor, but no one had the heart to do

so. Constantly Dr. West urged them on to this duty. He reminded them of the danger of delay, as well as the seriousness of being without a pastor and leader. Often had young Rev. Roy Prince Blinkerman supplied Dr. West's pulpit while the pastor was on his sick leave. The pulpit committee could not decide who would be an acceptable man. They were about to become divided in their opinions, and an unfortunate condition had almost arisen. While the committee was deliberating one evening, yet arriving at no conclusion, Brother Ralph Ragland, a member of the committee, arose and addressed the presiding officer: "Brother Moderator, I move we recommend to the church for our pastor, Brother Roy Prince Blinkerman, of Highlands." It must have been an inspiration from heaven, for a half-dozen men seconded the motion. After a long discussion, the motion was put to the committee and it was almost unanimously carried. Different ones of the church heard of the action of the committee and expressed their decided approval. The Wests and Blinker refused to discuss the matter with any individual. The Sunday for the committee's report arrived and the secretary of the committee made the announcement. The church unanimously adopted it with a few of the members not voting. It seemed that God had just brought the name of this young

man to them and all were glad to accept His guidance. When the news of the call of Roy was brought to the Wests, Mrs. West spoke first, "Ruth can have the furniture we left there." That was the mother heart expressing her interest in the new queen of the manse. All Dr. West said was: "It is wonderful." Blinker said, "I will go on in my duty just the same."

Within thirty days more Roy and Ruth moved into the church manse, and it seemed so fitting and natural. The church was so well organized and trained that all moved along in its work. Young Blinkerman was a fine preacher. The Tarrytown Church realized it had lost a noble pastor, but they also had to realize their future work must be with another leader, hence, they cast the mantle of Dr. West on Roy Blinkerman and said, "He is ours, too."

Some good friends presented Dr. and Mrs. West with a radio receiving set, which enabled them to hear the services from the old church. As the retired pastor would listen to the sermons of young Blinkerman, his face would light up and the old-time fire would come back into his eye. One Sunday night while the young pastor was preaching a sermon on "Heaven," Dr. West sat in silence, apparently lost in his meditation. Roy closed his sermon by quoting those beautiful lines of Tennyson:

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me,
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound or foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep,
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark,
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark.

For though from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far:
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar.

As the last lovely words of the poem were spoken, Mrs. West noticed that Dr. West's head fell forward a little to one side. Rushing to him, she clearly saw that the third and fatal stroke had fallen. In her hurry, Mrs. West left the radio intact, the music of the last song was coming in from the church as they sang:

"Not now, but in the coming years;
It may be in the better land,
We'll read the meaning of our tears,
And there, sometime we'll understand."

Just one brief sentence passed the lips of Dr. West as in whispered tones he said: "I'm crossing the bar." Before Mrs. West could call her nearest neighbor, it was all over. The distress call was sent out into the community surrounding the little house, and friends came in, but the first man from the church to reach the little churchless manse was Blinker. Nobody knows to this day how he heard the news or by what swift method he reached the little house of sorrow; it was just accepted that he, as always, was the "Man of the Hour."

Two days later, down at the big church, the funeral was held, conducted by Rev. Joseph Holcomb and Rev. Samuel Preston, two retired ministers, whose needs had been supplied by the "Veteran's Reward," while Roy Prince Blinkerman sat with the family in the pew of mourning. Many people were unable to get into the church, as it was filled to capacity thirty minutes before the hour for the services arrived. The flowers which covered the pulpit, altar, and the organ loft, were the most beautiful ever seen in the church. By five o'clock all had left the cemetery, where the sainted minister, loyal

THE OLD AND THE NEW

"The yesterdays projected themselves into the bright morning of the new day"

friend, and first citizen, rested beneath the loving, sheltering arms of a sentinel oak.

"Come on with us, Mother West," said Roy, "Ruth and I have set aside for you the room you occupied so many years. We will go, tomorrow, to the little house and bring all the furniture and treasures so dear to you, and they shall be about you under the same old roof." Only a few days were required in getting the manse readjusted, and the affairs of the little family were in fine order. Alex, who had lingered a few days after the funeral, said to Roy and Ruth, "I must go back to my duties, but the needs of my mother, I will supply. As yet, I have no home in which to keep her. If ever I do have one, she must visit me often and long. In the meantime, I know Ruth will need her and she will need Ruth. No amount of money is too much for me to give her."

Soon Alex was gone, and once more the old manse was the scene of natural days and duties of God's preacher. Months slipped by; the church prospered and the household was as happy in each other's love as could be. "Roy," said Ruth, one evening as they chatted in the den, "I want your father to live with us. We have this big spare bed-room down-stairs, and he would be so comfortable there. He has had no home-life for many years, besides, my own heart

wants him here with us. Next to my own father, he has been to me my dearest friend." When Roy could find his voice, he replied, "Ruth, how did God succeed in making you so good? As a sweetheart you were dear, as wife you are divine, and as a Christian you are well-nigh perfect."

Next day they presented their request to Blinker, and he agreed to come, and neither did Roy or Ruth ever remember seeing him so happy before.

It was Good Friday in the year 1921; breakfast was over and the young pastor was hurrying to his study to finish his Easter sermon. When just outside the gate, he looked back. What a picture met his eyes! From his mother's arms, Roy Blinkerman III was cooing and waving, then the face of Ruth, a short space to the rear the smiling countenance of Mrs. West, and in the background stood a nobleman indeed, Blinker.

On the other side was Dr. West, helping Christ, if He will permit it, set in order the great manse, for the home-coming of Hazel.

THE END

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